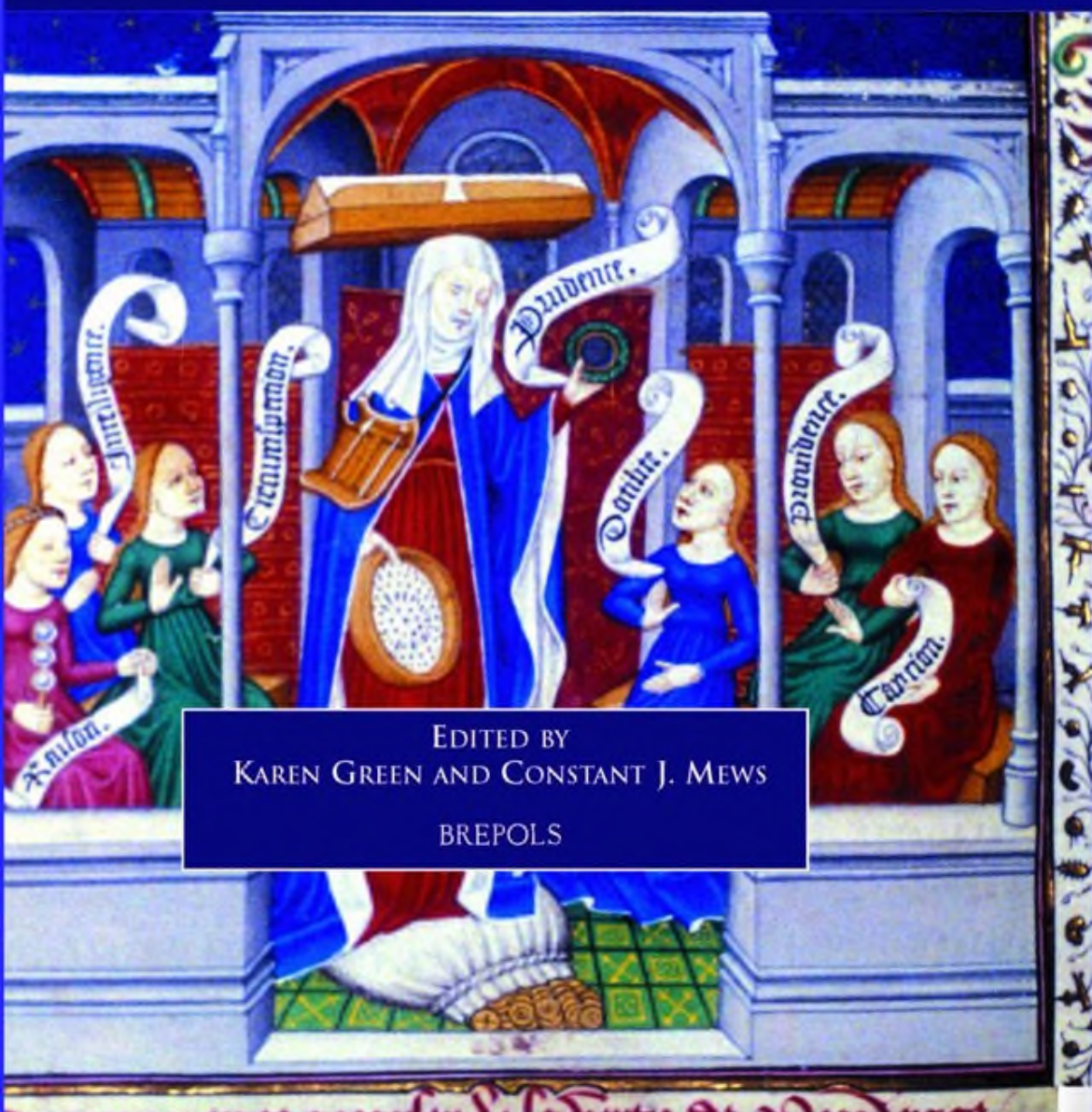


# HEALING THE BODY POLITIC

THE POLITICAL THOUGHT  
OF CHRISTINE DE PIZAN



EDITED BY  
KAREN GREEN AND CONSTANT J. MEWS

BREPOLS



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The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan

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## DISPUTATIO

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The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Healing the body politic : the political thought of Christine de Pizan. –  
(Disputatio ; v. 7)

1.Christine, de Pisan, ca. 1364-ca. 1431 – Political and social views

I.Green, Karen II.Mews, C. J.

841.2

ISBN 250351636-X

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D/2005/0095/23  
ISBN 2-503-51636-X

Printed in the EU on acid-free paper.

Eric Hicks

In Memoriam





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## Abbreviations

### EDITIONS AND TRANSLATIONS OF THE WRITINGS OF CHRISTINE DE PIZAN

<i>Advision</i>	<i>Le Livre de l'advision Cristine</i> , ed. by Christine Reno and Liliane Dulac (Paris: Champion, 2001); <i>Christine's Vision</i> , trans. by Glenda K. McLeod (New York: Garland, 1993).
<i>Cent ballades</i>	<i>Cent ballades d'amant et de dame</i> , ed. by Jacqueline Cerquiglini (Paris: Union générale d'éditions, 1982); <i>Christine de Pisan's ballades, rondeaux and virelais: an anthology</i> , ed. by Kenneth Varty (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1965).
<i>Chevalerie</i>	<i>The Book of Deeds of Arms and Chivalry</i> , trans. by Sumner Willard and ed. by Charity Cannon Willard (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).
<i>Cité des dames</i>	<i>La città delle dame</i> , ed. by Earl Jeffrey Richards and trans. into Italian by Patrizia Caraffi (Milan: Luni, 1997); <i>The Book of the City of Ladies</i> , trans. by Earl Jeffrey Richards (London: Picador, 1983).
<i>Corps de policie</i>	<i>Le Livre du corps de policie</i> , ed. by Angus J. Kennedy, <i>Etudes christiniennes</i> , 1 (Paris: Champion, 1998); <i>The Book of the Body Politic</i> , trans. by Kate L. Forhan, <i>Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
<i>Débat</i>	<i>Christine de Pizan, Jean Gerson, Jean de Montreuil, Gontier et Pierre Col: Le Débat sur le Roman de la Rose</i> , ed. by Eric Hicks (Paris: Champion, 1977); <i>La Querelle de la rose: Letters and Documents</i> , trans. by Joseph L. Baird and John R. Kane (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978).
<i>Ditié</i>	<i>Le Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc</i> , ed. and trans. by Angus J. Kennedy and Kenneth Varty, <i>Medium Ævum Monographs n.s. IX</i> (Oxford: Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, 1977).

<i>Dieu d'amours</i>	<i>Epistre au dieu d'amours</i> , in <i>Poems of Cupid, God of Love</i> , ed. and trans. by Thelma Fenster and Mary Carpenter Erler (Leiden: Brill, 1990).
<i>Fais et bonnes meurs</i>	<i>Le Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V</i> , ed. by Suzanne Solente, 2 vols (Paris: Champion, 1936–40); <i>Le Livre des faits et bonnes moeurs du roi Charles V le sage</i> , trans. by Eric Hicks and Thérèse Moreau (Paris: Stock, 1997).
<i>Long estude</i>	<i>Le Livre du chemin de longue estude</i> , ed. by Robert Püschel (Berlin: Damköhler, 1881; Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1974); <i>Le Chemin de longue étude</i> , ed. and trans. by Andrea Tarnowski (Paris: Librairie générale française, Livre de poche, 2000).
<i>Mutacion de Fortune</i>	<i>Le Livre de la mutacion de Fortune</i> , ed. by Suzanne Solente, 4 vols (Paris: Picard, 1959–66).
<i>Othea</i>	<i>Epistre Othea</i> , ed. by Gabriella Parussa, Textes littéraires français (Geneva: Droz, 1999); <i>Christine de Pizan's Letter of Othea to Hector</i> , trans. by Jane Chance (Newburyport MA: Focus Information Group, 1990).
<i>Paix</i>	<i>The 'Livre de la paix' of Christine de Pisan: A Critical Edition, with Introduction and Notes</i> , ed. by Charity Cannon Willard ('s-Gravenhague: Mouton, 1958).
<i>Prison/Epistre</i>	<i>The Epistle of the Prison of Human Life, with an Epistle to the Queen of France; and, Lament on the Evils of the Civil War</i> , ed. and trans. by Josette Wisman Garland Series of Medieval Literature, series A, no. 21 (New York: Garland, 1984).
<i>Prudence</i>	<i>Le Livre de prudence (Le Livre de la prod'homme de l'homme)</i> ; critical edition announced by Eric Hicks and Simone Pagot.
<i>Trois vertus</i>	<i>Le Livre des trois vertus: édition critique</i> , ed. by Charity Cannon Willard and Eric Hicks, Bibliothèque du XV <sup>e</sup> siècle, 50 (Paris: Champion, 1989); <i>The Treasure of the City of Ladies</i> , trans. by Sarah Lawson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985).
<i>Vrais amans</i>	<i>Le livre du duc des vrais amans</i> , ed. by Thelma S. Fenster, Medieval & Renaissance texts and studies, 124 (Binghamton: State University of New York, 1995); <i>The Book of the Duke of True Lovers</i> , trans. by Thelma S. Fenster (New York: Persea Books, 1991).

#### OTHER ABBREVIATIONS

CCSL	Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954–)
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Mediaevalis (Turnhout: Brepols, 1966–)
PL	<i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus</i> , Series Latina, ed. by Jacques-Paul Migne, 221 vols (Paris, 1844–66)

## Introduction

KAREN GREEN

During the thirty-two years between 1398 and 1430 Christine de Pizan wrote a string of political texts which ranged in genre from her 1398 *Epistre de Dieu d'amour* (*Letter of the God of Love*), a defence of women in the form of a courtly poem, and the hybrid *Epistre Othea* (*Letter of Othea*) of 1400, to prose texts in the tradition of 'mirror of princes' which approached more closely the standard paradigm of a political treatise and offered advice on proper princely behaviour. Both the *Epistre Othea* and the *Livre des fais et meurs du sage roi Charles V* have something of a hybrid character. The first, sometimes thought of as a 'courtesy book' comprizing a series of moral vignettes taken from the history of Troy, has also been argued to have elements of a work in the tradition of mirrors of princes. Christine's history of Charles V has a similarly dual function, being both a history, and an account of an exemplary life intended to function as a work of moral and political advice.

Christine also wrote books that were unambiguously in this tradition of political thought. Of these her *Livre de la prod'hommie de l'homme* (*Book of Man's Practical Manliness*), rewritten as *Le Livre de prudence* (*Book of Prudence*), was probably the earliest, followed closely in 1407 by *Le Livre du corps de policie* (*The Book of the Body Politic*) and later by *Le Livre de paix* (*The Book of Peace*) written during 1412–14. Two allegorical poems from 1402–03, *Le Chemin de longue estude* (*The Long Path of Learning*) and *Le Livre de la mutacion de Fortune* (*The Mutation of Fortune*), also have political significance. While Christine's 1405 *Le Livre de la cité des dames* (*The Book of the City of Ladies*) and *Le Livre des trois vertus* (*The Book of Three Virtues*) extend the realm of the political in a manner that has earned Christine the reputation of having been one of the earliest feminist political thinkers. Two occasional works, *Une Epistre a la royne de France* (*Letter to the Queen*) and *Lamentacion sur les maux de la guerre civile* (*Lament on the evils of civil war*) show Christine attempting to intervene directly in the political events of her time, first in 1405 and secondly in 1409. Lastly, *L'Advision Cristine* (*Christine's Vision*) of 1405

mixes prophetic political warnings with a Christian epistemology of virtue, and while it is one of her most difficult texts to interpret, it shows her at her most complex and philosophical.

Approaching the political thought of a woman writing for members of the French royal family in the first years of the fifteenth century requires a certain caution. What is the context of this writing, and how are we to interpret it? Does she deserve the title political theorist, feminist, philosopher, as well as courtly poet? Is her writing merely an exception and anomaly? Or is it in fact only the most obvious manifestation of a repressed and forgotten tradition of women's political discourse? What was the content of her thought, and was it original or a mere repetition of the political theories of others? What was her influence, both during her life and afterwards? A woman writer of such substance and rhetorical sophistication working so early in the Renaissance raises all sorts of questions, both for the way in which we represent our own intellectual tradition, and for the way in which feminism understands itself. For many of those coming to Christine from contemporary women's studies, the questions that she raises pose new challenges of scholarship and self-understanding. Together, the essays in this volume take up those challenges, and, building on the enormous florescence of Christine scholarship during the last two decades of the twentieth century and the first years of the twenty-first, offer a more in depth and nuanced appreciation of her contribution and importance than has previously been available.

The papers in this collection serve to challenge the history taught to those of us who were trained during the twentieth century in philosophy or political science departments of English speaking universities. For we were told that history demonstrates that there are no significant female political thinkers. Even a feminist of the calibre of Simone de Beauvoir confirmed this impression, for despite having made some incursions into the history of women's thought, she argued that women had never been transcendent historical subjects, but had always been the 'Other' of man the subject.<sup>1</sup> She was aware of Christine's *Epistre de Dieu d'amour* and interpreted it as a contribution to the *querelle des femmes* which she dismissed saying 'the quarrel' was a secondary phenomenon reflecting social attitudes but not changing them.<sup>2</sup> During most of the twentieth century, in so far as a tradition of woman's thought was recognized, it was assumed that the 'Enlightenment' had unshackled the minds of a few women, such as Mary Wollstonecraft and Harriet Martineau. The standard depiction of history suggested that the aspirations of such women would have come to little had they not been made into serious political agendas by men such as John Stuart Mill, whose wife Harriet Taylor often fell from view. By the 1980s women had begun to uncover some of the details of the writings and influence of post-Enlightenment women. Dale Spender who began her book, *Women of Ideas*, with the

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<sup>1</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. by H. M. Parshley (London: Vintage, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 136.

question ‘why didn’t I know?’ was one of those who brought to light the history of women thinkers and writers, but she pushed it back no further than the seventeenth century Aphra Behn.<sup>3</sup> For most women working outside French literary or medieval studies, the name ‘Christine de Pizan’ meant nothing. Even among historians she was a known but marginal figure, and it was only with the publication of Earl Jeffrey Richards’s translation of the *Book of the City of Ladies* that a wider audience began to be aware that a substantial body of women’s political writing existed before the French Revolution.<sup>4</sup> But anachronism loomed. Could one really treat this woman as a political thinker? Should one treat her defence of women’s virtue as a precursor of later feminist ideas, or were her writings isolated and insignificant? As an active apologist for monarchy and the French crown, could she really be taken to be a feminist precursor? The papers in this volume serve both to answer these questions and to situate Christine’s works more firmly both within the tradition of medieval political thought and feminism.

In his scene-setting piece on Christine’s three political paradigms, Barry Collett locates Christine’s political writings within the developing genres of medieval political treatises. He argues that as well as writing in the older vein of the ‘mirror of princes’ offering moral advice to an individual prince, many of Christine’s works are examples of a newer emerging form of practical manuals of good political and household organization. This newer genre was derived from the tradition of the Benedictine Rule, and focused on principles of good organization. Thus the detailed account of the ‘beautiful order’ of Charles V’s personal life, his public processions and his prompt and orderly dispatch of public business in Christine’s account of his life provides concrete advice concerning the proper management of the state. In a similar vein, Christine explains in detail how a noble woman will manage an estate, overseeing her workers, managing the finances and organizing every aspect of the estate with foresight. Following Aristotle’s account of prudence as the practical knowledge of the good, whether applied to the government of a state, a household or an individual, Christine, in her writings directed at women and men, attempted to characterize this knowledge for the sake of both women and men. She can thus be seen to have anticipated later works of practical political advice such as Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, although she never shows Machiavelli’s cynicism and places far more emphasis on the importance of love between ruler and ruled than did Machiavelli.

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<sup>3</sup> Dale Spender, *Women of Ideas and What Men Have Done to Them* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982).

<sup>4</sup> Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. by Earl Jeffrey Richards (London: Picador, 1983). Richards has outlined the circuitous path that led him to concentrate on this ‘marginal’ figure in his ‘A Path of Long Study: In Search of Christine de Pizan’, in *Maistresse of My Wit: Medieval Women, Modern Scholars*, ed. by Louise D’Arcens and Juanita Feros Ruys, *Making the Middle Ages*, 7 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), pp. 93–145.

Not long after the appearance of the translation of *Le Livre de la cité des dames* and the nearly contemporary English translation of *Le Livre des trois vertus* debate over Christine's political attitudes was stimulated by Sheila Delany's spirited attack on Christine for her political conservatism and lack of any genuine feminism.<sup>5</sup> Delany assumed that since Christine endorsed monarchy and a hierarchical social structure, in which each estate was urged to mind its own business, she should in no way be elevated to the status of a feminist fore-mother. Three papers in this collection touch on this debate. As Kate Langdon Forhan did in her recent book, *The Political Philosophy of Christine de Pizan*, they also emphasize the importance of John of Salisbury's metaphor of the body politic in Christine's thinking.<sup>6</sup> Cary J. Nederman compares Christine's use of the body politic metaphor with that of Nicole Oresme, demonstrating that these authors used the organic metaphor to argue for reciprocity and harmony within the political body. Just as a body cannot be healthy if some part of it grows to a disproportionate size, so no part of the political body should be allowed to grow excessively rich at the expense of the others. Thus while Christine is highly critical of the murderous uprising of the masses which has come to be named after Pierre Caboche, she is also sympathetic to the needs of the people. Her analysis of the distemper destroying France's integrity is that it is largely the result of a malfunctioning of the governing parts, the princes and knights whose role it is to protect and oversee the body politic. They have an obligation to keep the polity in good spiritual and economic health. But they have failed in their duty and been corrupted by greed. Thus Christine's thinking is critical of the unjust behaviour of the rich as well as that of the poor. In a paper which develops earlier work on Christine's attitude to the *menu peuple*, Susan J. Dudash examines Christine's attitude to 'the people' through the lens of the medieval tavern. She argues that Christine that while Christine was sympathetic to the needs of the ordinary people,

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<sup>5</sup> Sheila Delany, "'Mothers to Think Back Through': Who Are They? The Ambiguous Example of Christine de Pizan", in *Medieval Texts and Contemporary Readers*, ed. by Laurie A. Finke and Martin B. Schichtman (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 177–97. Among the responses to Delany are, Susan Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan's Views of the Third Estate', in *Contexts and Continuities: Proceedings of the IVth International Colloquium on Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Angus J. Kennedy, Rosalind Brown-Grant, James Laidlaw, and Catherine Müller (Glasgow: Glasgow University Press, 2002), pp. 315–30; Otto Gerhard Oexle, 'Christine et les pauvres', in *The City of Scholars: New Approaches to Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Margarete Zimmermann and Dina de Rentiis (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994), pp. 214–15. Christine M. Reno, 'Christine de Pizan: "at Best a Contradictory Figure"?' in *Politics, Gender and Genre: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Margaret Brabant (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), pp. 171–91. See Delany's response in Sheila Delany, 'History, Politics and Christine Studies: A Polemical Reply', in *Politics, Gender and Genre*, pp. 193–206.

<sup>6</sup> Kate L. Forhan, *The Political Theory of Christine de Pizan* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2002).



she also condemned the gluttony, laziness and lack of sobriety that resulted from their frequenting the tavern was sympathetic to the needs of the ordinary people.<sup>7</sup>

Despite Delany's doubts, one should not underestimate the originality and strength of Christine's major political innovation: her inclusion of women within the body politic. For though there had been, within earlier medieval discourses, some debate between those who were defenders of women, and the more vocal detractors of the daughters of Eve, no one had previously so firmly assigned women an integral place within the polity. Nor had anyone previously claimed, as explicitly as Christine did, that women possessed equally with men the kind of prudence necessary for governing a polity, a household or their own person.<sup>8</sup> Christine sums up her position with regard to women's place in the polity in the following passage from *Le Livre de la cité des dames*:

autre chose n'est bien commun ou publique en une cité ou pays ou communauté de peuple fors un prouffit et bien general, ouquel chacun, tant femmes comme hommes, participent ou ont part. Mais la chose qui seroit faicte en cuidant proffiter aux uns et non aux autres, seroit appellé bien privé ou propre, et non mie publique. Et encores moins le seroit le bien que on touldroit aux uns pour donner aux autres et tele chose doit estre appellee non mie seulement bien propre ou privé mais droicte extortion faicte a autrui en faveur de partie et a son grief pour soustenir l'autre. [...] Et n'est mie doute que les femmes sont aussi bien ou nombre du peuple de Dieu et de creature humaine que sont les hommes, et non mie une autre espece, ne de dessemblable generacion, par quoy elles doyent estre forcloses des enseignemens moraulx.

the common good of a city or land or any community of people is nothing other than the profit or general good in which all members, women as well as men, participate and take part. But whatever is done with the intention of benefiting some and not others is a matter of private and not public welfare. Even less so is an activity in which one takes from some and gives to others, and such an activity is perpetrated for the sake of private gain, and at the same time it constitutes, quite simply a crime committed for the benefit of one person and to the disadvantage of the other. [...] There is not the slightest doubt that women belong to the people of God and the human race as much as men, and are not another species or dissimilar race, for which they should be excluded from moral teachings.<sup>9</sup>

One can clearly see in this passage Christine extending the ethic of harmony and reciprocity within the body politic to include women. As Tsae Lan Lee Dow argues in her contribution to this collection, this constitutes a completely original feminizing of the body politic. Indeed, by contrast, the post enlightenment relegation of women to the natural 'pre-political' private sphere of the family can be seen to have

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<sup>7</sup> Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan's Views of the Third Estate'.

<sup>8</sup> For a thorough discussion of the medieval defence of women see Alcuin Blamires, *The Case for Women in Medieval Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

<sup>9</sup> Pizan, *Cité des dames*, II. 54. 1, pp. 376–78 (trans. by Richards, p. 187).

constituted a considerable backsliding in the representation of women's place within the polity. In *L'Advision Cristine* the general feminization of the body politic is made graphic in Christine's original image of France as a woman, Libera, who, once great and well served by the virtues of her princes, has become the prisoner of Fraud, Luxury and Greed.<sup>10</sup>

Christine's importance as a political theorist was recognized as early as the 1830s by Raymond Thomassey in his *Essai sur les écrits politiques de Christine de Pisan* and then suffered a long period of neglect.<sup>11</sup> It is only recently that her contributions to this area have begun to receive the attention they deserve. The early studies of Claude Gauvard, and Gianni Mombello were somewhat sceptical of Christine's importance as a political thinker.<sup>12</sup> In particular it has been suggested that she was more a moralist than a political theorist, an assessment echoed in a recent discussion of *Le Livre de paix* by Tania van Hemelryck who suggests that Christine's political pleas 'propose more of a moral than a political program for bringing about the peace' ('proposer un programme plus moral que politique pour converger vers la paix').<sup>13</sup> A more positive evaluation of the political originality of Christine's thought was, however, provided some time ago by Josette Wisman who argued that, at a period when nationalist sentiments were rare, Christine's thought was surprisingly modern in its nationalism.<sup>14</sup> A little later, a detailed study of the political iconography of the illuminations in Christine's later manuscripts of her collected works was published by Sandra Hindman arguing for the political import of works not previously fully recognized as political interventions.<sup>15</sup> Yet more recently Berenice Carroll has argued that Christine made a significant contribution to early discussions of just war and of the means for establishing and maintaining peace.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, 'Enemies within/Enemies Without: Threats to the Body Politic in Christine de Pisan', *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 26 (1999), 1–15, esp. p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> Raymond Thomassey, *Essai sur les écrits politiques de Christine de Pisan* (Paris Debécourt: 1831).

<sup>12</sup> Claude Gauvard, 'Christine de Pisan a-t-elle eu une pensée politique?', *Revue historique*, 250 (1973), 417–29; Gianni Mombello, 'Quelques aspects de la pensée politique de Christine de Pisan d'après ses oeuvres publiées', in *Culture et politique en France à l'époque de l'humanisme et de la Renaissance* (Turin: Accademia delle Scienze, 1971), pp. 43–153.

<sup>13</sup> Tania van Hemelryck, 'Christine de Pisan et la paix', in *Au champ des escriptures*, ed. by Eric Hicks and others. (Paris: Champion, 2000), pp. 663–89, esp. p. 666.

<sup>14</sup> Josette Wisman, 'L'éveil du sentiment national au Moyen Age: la pensée politique de Christine de Pisan', *Revue historique*, 522 (1977), 289–97.

<sup>15</sup> Sandra Hindman, *Christine de Pisan's 'Épistre Othea' Painting and Politics at the Court of Charles VI* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1986).

<sup>16</sup> Berenice Carroll, 'Christine de Pisan and the Origins of Peace Theory', in *Women Writers and the Early Modern British Political Tradition*, ed. by Hilda Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 22–39; Berenice Carroll, 'On the Causes of War and the Quest for Peace: Christine de Pisan and Early Peace Theory', in *Au champ des escriptures*,

A number of papers in this collection serve to underscore the genuinely political character of Christine's thinking and its embedding in a rich Latin tradition. In fact the contrast between moral and political thought that some earlier commentators assume is an artefact of a post-Hobbesian political theory that is alien to the patterns of thought within which Christine was working. Christine was heir to a well-established Latin tradition of political thought that had its origins in Aristotle reinterpreted by his Stoic descendants, Cicero and Seneca, and revisioned in Christian terms by Aquinas, Giles of Rome, Alan of Lille, and other less well known Latin authors.

Constant J. Mews's examination of the Latin texts which introduce each section of *Le Livre de paix* establishes Christine's familiarity with this tradition. These epigraphs demonstrate that Christine was a skilled Latinist and was acquainted with a wide range of Latin sources. While she may have consulted *florilegia* in order to glean passages suitable for her purposes, she was, at least in *Le Livre de paix*, far less dependent on Thomas of Ireland's *Manipulus florum* than she has elsewhere been represented as being. In his paper, Earl Jeffrey Richards also demonstrates the considerable extent of Christine's Latin education. Concentrating on *Le Livre de paix* he extends an argument that he has developed elsewhere that Christine was well acquainted with the legal tradition of Bologna, in which her father and grandfather had been trained.<sup>17</sup> Noting the temporal proximity between Christine's stated return to writing *Le Livre de paix* and Jean Gerson's refutation of Jean Petit's defence of tyrannicide, Richards argues that Christine's text demands 'reflection on political legitimacy and on the relationship between justice and tyranny'. Such a reflection, while it has a moral aspect is also clearly political.

Two papers, one by Karen Green and the other by Michael Richarz, examine in detail one of the most central political concepts in Christine's thought, the concept of prudence. Prudence is practical wisdom, but since, within the medieval synthesis of Christianity and Aristotle given its most authoritative elaboration by St Thomas Aquinas, wisdom itself is ultimately knowledge of God, this practical political wisdom cannot be distinguished from practical moral knowledge in general. Green traces the development of Christine's use of the term 'prudence' from the *Epistre Othea* to *Le Livre de paix*. She argues that Christine's early use of the term makes little distinction between prudence and wisdom, which suggests that she knew

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ed. by Eric Hicks and others (Paris: Champion, 2000), pp. 337–58.

<sup>17</sup> Earl Jeffrey Richards, 'Christine de Pizan and Medieval Jurisprudence', in *Contexts and Continuities, Proceedings of the Fourth International Colloquium on Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Angus J. Kennedy and others (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 2002), pp. 747–66; Earl Jeffrey Richards, '*Glossa Aurelianensis Est Quae Destruit Textum*: Medieval Rhetoric, Thomism and Humanism in Christine de Pizan's Critique of the *Roman de la rose*', *Cahiers de recherche médiévales* (XIII<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> s.), 5 (1998), 247–63; Earl Jeffrey Richards, 'Somewhere between Destructive Glosses and Chaos', in *Christine de Pizan: A Casebook*, ed. by Barbara K. Altmann and Deborah McGrady (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 43–55.

Aristotle largely second-hand. However, subtle transformations in Christine's usage are evidence that, as she matured, she became more fully versed in Aristotle's own writings and the Aristotelian concept of *phronesis* from which the Latin *prudencia* and French *prudence* were derived. Richarz examines Christine's understanding of the virtue of prudence as it occurs in *Le Livre des fais et meurs du sage roi Charles V*. This discussion illuminates the philosophical roots of Christine's political ideas in Aristotle's thought, understood against the background of Aquinas's commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. In that work, by representing metaphysics as a knowledge of first causes, Aquinas had subsumed all ancient metaphysical learning within theology, so that the practical political knowledge of the prince is represented as the application of the more general desire to know God. Some years ago, Liliane Dulac and Christine Reno demonstrated that Aquinas's commentary on Aristotle was an important source for *L'Advison Cristine*.<sup>18</sup> It is this context which allows the 'secular' and practical knowledge of how to organize a state, encompassed by prudence, to be represented by Christine as a part of, rather than opposed to, theology, the study of Biblical texts and knowledge of God. In her detailed discussion of Christine's representation of the liberal arts, Glynnis Cropp illustrates how Christine develops and adapts earlier accounts of the liberal arts in her *Mutacion de Fortune* and *L'Advison Cristine* and how she identifies philosophy with theology. Cropp concludes that it was thus that 'Christine de Pizan conceived and expressed the concord of philosophy rooted in the wisdom of classical antiquity and theology based on the truth of the Bible and the teaching of the Church.'

Of equal importance to Aquinas and Aristotle for understanding Christine's fusion of ancient and Christian ideas, is Augustine, whose *City of God* inspired the title of Christine's *Livre de la cité des dames*. In her contribution to this collection Julia Holderness elaborates the way in which this Augustinian influence can also be read in *La Mutacion de Fortune*. Holderness's discussion serves to illuminate from another angle the way in which Christine understands and uses the analogy between practical art and architecture which is put to work in the ordered construction of a palace or city, with the practical prudence that serves to maintain good order in a household or state.

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<sup>18</sup> Liliane Dulac and Christine M. Reno, 'Traduction et adaptation dans l'*Advison Christine* de Christine de Pizan', in *Traduction et adaptation en France à la fin du Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance: Actes du colloque organisé par l'Université de Nancy II (23–24 Mars 1995)*, ed. by Charles Brucker (Paris: Champion, 1997), pp. 121–31; Liliane Dulac and Christine M. Reno, 'L'humanisme vers 1400, essai d'exploration à partir d'un cas marginal: Christine de Pizan traductrice de Thomas d'Aquin', *Pratiques de la culture écrite en France au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle: Actes du Colloque international du CNRS, Paris, 16–18 mai 1992, organisé en l'honneur de Gilbert Ouy par l'Unité de recherche 'Culture écrite du Moyen Âge tardif'*, ed. by Monique Ornato and Nicole Pons, *Textes et études du Moyen Âge*, 2 (Louvain-la-neuve: FIDEM, 1995), pp. 161–78.

The twenty years since Richards's translation of *Le Livre de la cité des dames* have seen an explosion in studies of Christine. But it would be a mistake to represent Christine as unknown to women in previous generations. Indeed, Richards has himself documented the fact that she was not forgotten during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Some of her works were reprinted by Mlle de Kéralio in her *Collection des meilleurs ouvrages françois composés par des femmes françoises* (Paris: Lagrange, 1786–88). The full story of women's knowledge of Christine and her influence on the self-representation of women in power is still to be written. Initial studies of her influence show that Isabel of Portugal, and possibly Anne of France, disseminated her ideas and that Marguerite of Austria, Anne of Brittany and Elizabeth I of England owned tapestries that replicated the images that she had developed in the *Livre de la cité des dames* to show that women had prudence in government.<sup>19</sup> Thus one can conclude that Christine's writing was politically effective in that it provided an ideology of active queenship that was known to and adapted by numerous renaissance queens and princesses.

The power of the images of female authority that Christine developed, both to underscore her own right to offer advice and to encourage other women to fulfil their duties, is attested to by their later popularity. But Christine's intentions in developing these images are not entirely clear. The political context in which Christine wrote was extraordinarily complex and unstable. Charles VI, who had come to the throne in 1380 as a teenager had suffered the first of a devastating series of mental breakdowns in 1392, and these prevented him from governing effectively. His wife, Isabeau of Bavaria, was in 1402 given the power to deal with any government business in his times of 'absence' but her capacity to govern was constrained by conflicting powers also granted to the princes of the blood.<sup>20</sup> In particular, rivalries between Charles VI's brother Louis of Orleans, and his uncle Philip of Burgundy erupted in the early years of the century providing Isabeau with constant conflicts that required mediation. These conflicts were inherited in exacerbated form by the descendants of Louis and Philip, after the 1407 murder of Louis of Orleans by agents of Philip's son, John the Fearless. Many historians have painted Isabeau as a venal

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<sup>19</sup> Susan Groag Bell, 'The Lost Tapestries of "the City of Ladies"', in *Sur le chemin de longue étude*, ed. by Bernard Ribémont (Paris: Champion, 1998), pp. 7–12; Susan Groag Bell, 'A Lost Tapestry: Margaret of Austria's Cité des Dames', in *Une Femme de lettres au Moyen Age*, ed. by Liliane Dulac and Bernard Ribémont (Orléans: Paradigme, 1995), pp. 449–67; and Susan Groag Bell, *The Lost Tapestries of the City of Ladies: Christine de Pizan's Renaissance Legacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). Charity Cannon Willard, 'Anne de France, Reader of Christine de Pizan', in *The Reception of Christine de Pisan from the Fifteenth through the Nineteenth Centuries: Visitors to the City*, ed. by Glenda K. McLeod (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1991), pp. 59–70; Charity Cannon Willard, 'A Portuguese Translation of Christine de Pizan's *Livre des Trois Vertus*', *PMLA*, 78 (1963), 289–97.

<sup>20</sup> R. C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue: Crisis at the Court of Charles VI* (New York: AMS Press, 1986) pp. 27–29.

and corrupt princess who had an affair with her brother-in-law Louis. It has been widely suggested that Charles VII was the illegitimate fruit of this affair. Isabeau has been cast in the role of an Eve, who brought destruction to the realm of France, which was only redeemed by the appearance in 1429 of the virgin Joan of Arc, who fulfilled a prophecy that the realm lost by a woman would be saved by a woman.

Historians of this period now largely agree that Isabeau's bad reputation was a confection based on few facts. But the image of Isabeau, the adulterous and frivolous queen who brought destruction and ruin, has cast its shadow over received interpretations of the intention of Christine's writing and her relationship with Isabeau. Tracy Adams, in her groundbreaking paper, casts doubt on the widespread assumption that Christine disapproved of Isabeau. Following recent writers who have sought to rehabilitate Isabeau, she suggests that Christine was sensitive to contradictions of the mediating role which the queen was called on to perform. Isabeau found herself in a 'liminal' position both within and outside the French royal family. She was called upon to govern and yet distrusted as an outsider, required to mediate and yet without the effective power to enforce the results of her mediation. Christine, Adams suggests, should be seen as an ideologist interested in constructing a place from which Isabeau could operate. The calls for mediation, and the image of the virtuous mediating prince or princess that Christine fashions should not be taken as evidence that Isabeau was not in fact an active political agent, but should rather be seen as part of an attempt to legitimate and frame Isabeau's authority.

In her piece in this collection Louise D'Arcens also focuses on the important role of the mediator in Christine's *oeuvre* and on the strategies the Christine adopts to uphold Isabeau's *autoritas* as well as her own. D'Arcens examines the lachrymose persona that Christine constructs for herself, demonstrating its connections with the Marian tradition of the *mater dolorosa* and showing how this builds on the accepted intercessionary authority of the Virgin. In her concluding overview of the interaction between Christine's 'masculine' and 'feminine' political realms Tsae Lan Lee Dow argues that the analogy of the harmonious marriage in which men and women 'live together in great peacefulness, love and loyalty' provides a model through which Christine understands ideal political relations, both between and within the masculine and feminine spheres.

The political theory that has been taught within the English speaking academy during the twentieth century characteristically begins with Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics* and then leaps, with the briefest nod to Machiavelli's *Prince*, to Hobbes's *Leviathan* and the development of social contract theory and democratic political thought. This history has led to a tendency among feminists to claim that all political theory has been written from a masculine perspective. The essays in this volume will, we hope, contribute to a re-evaluation of the importance of medieval political theorists prior to Machiavelli, and of the misleading view that all political theory is masculine. These essays show, as well, the falsity of a common impression that it was only with the Enlightenment that women began to have an impact as political subjects. Against the background of Christine's forceful defence of the

prudence of women and their spiritual mission to intervene among men on the side of peace, harmony and effective social organization, later male characterizations of women's place within the political realm, in particular that developed by Rousseau, represent a considerable step backwards for women.

When we planned the conference where the majority of these papers had their first airing, Eric Hicks was among those whom we were eager to invite. Sadly, our invitation resulted in the response that he was already suffering from the illness which recently took his life. Most graciously he nevertheless put himself out to supply us with a copy of the edition of the *Livre de Prudence* that he was preparing, as well as with the modern French translation of the *Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V* that he had published with his wife Thérèse Moreau. We would like to take the opportunity to dedicate this volume to his memory and to offer our condolences to his wife and family. He will be remembered both for the invaluable work that he undertook to make Christine's thought available to a wider audience as well as for his erudite scholarship on Abelard. He will be sorely missed by the scholarly community.





## The Three Mirrors of Christine de Pizan

BARRY COLLETT

In common with other writers in the style of mirrors-for-princes (*speculum regis*), Christine de Pizan was familiar with ancient sources. She used classical Greek and Roman and Judaeo-Christian political ideas: Aristotle, Plutarch, Cicero, and Seneca, biographies, books of the Old and New Testaments, and Augustine, especially *De civitate Dei* with its concept of a community built of living stones, the holy people of God. However, Christine did not use only these sources, but also stood within an established tradition of medieval political theory and read and used medieval commentators on the nature of the body politic and the quality of governance. This article deals with the place of her writings within that tradition and the way in which she developed late medieval political commentary.

Medieval commentators on political philosophy considered, *inter alia*, three significant matters. The first was Aristotle's argument for the necessity of the body politic, accepted by all. The second was the question of the best form of government, for which some commentators developed Aristotle's categories of monarchy, oligarchy and democracy, and the ways in which they may be mixed. The third question produced the greatest differences between commentators; how should authority be exercised properly and effectively in order to achieve good governance? Giles of Rome and those who followed his approach answered this question by an emphasis on the personal morality and behaviour of rulers, generally supplementing their moral exhortations with items of practical advice about personal habits and advisers. This was the first mirror of advice. During the second half of the fourteenth century, these practical items became a separate, second mirror of advice. Then, towards the end of the century a third form of political advice began to appear, emphasizing how a well-governed body politic actually operated, with vivid descriptions of the dynamics of the body politic. These differing emphases—moral, practical, and operational, all with earlier roots—formed three distinct strands or 'mirrors' within late medieval political commentary. It also explains some ambivalences in Christine's writings as she moves from moral exhortations to

practical advice and then to the dynamics of a community and back again to moral entreaties, sometimes addressing princes and sometimes much wider audiences further down the social scale.

Late medieval commentators already had a model of good governance for imitation in the Rule of Saint Benedict, written in the sixth century. Although the Rule places great weight on the responsibility, morality, and other qualities of the abbot and gives numerous practical directions, it is principally focussed on the effective working of the community as a whole, both spiritually and administratively and on the efficiency and harmony of the community's day-to-day workings. Any influence of the Rule upon medieval thought was necessarily pervasive rather than specific, but the revival of Benedictine monasticism during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries inevitably made for widespread awareness of its communal ideals. More specifically, the fact that education took place in a monastic context meant that the Rule's emphasis upon the dynamics of the community was common knowledge amongst the monks' pupils, both from the ideas the teachers expressed and from the day-to-day operation of the abbey within whose environs the teaching took place.

John of Salisbury expressed a similar notion of a well-governed and smooth working community in *Policraticus* (1158), but incorporated elements of Aristotle and Cicero (thus anticipating Aquinas) into his writings on the harmonious body politic.<sup>1</sup> John's references to political morality, again drawing on Aristotle and Cicero, laid down little in the way of prescriptive morality for individuals in positions of authority: on the contrary, when he wrote that the ruler's authority is supreme but dependent upon the rest of the body, he made the ruler's personal morality a function of the dynamics of the body politic. His primary emphasis was placed on communal harmony, within which the ruler's personal morality stands in a secondary role, and it was this understanding of communal harmony which produced his famous Platonic metaphor of the body politic as a human body, which, when healthy, has its parts interdependent and functioning harmoniously. Of course, his metaphor was not entirely an abstract concept for his readers, who understood perfectly well that just as the ideals of the Benedictine Rule applied to real abbeys, so John's idealistic metaphor possessed pointed practical application to the turbulent, often violent, English and French political situations in which he was closely involved.

About a hundred years after John, Thomas Aquinas developed his own distinctive Christian–Aristotelian ethical approach to political thought. Aquinas argued from Aristotle that man is by nature a social creature for whom the political community is a natural entity, but he was also Augustinian enough to recognize the depth of sin as a fundamental political problem. His argument was that since fallen human beings

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<sup>1</sup> *Medieval Political Theory: A Reader: The Quest for the Body Politic, 1100–1400*, ed. by Cary J. Nederman and Kate Langdon Forhan (London: Routledge, 1993). Also, *Policraticus: Of the Frivolities of Courtiers and the Footprints of Philosophers*, trans. by Cary J. Nederman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

still have the capacity to use their God-given rationality to know and to act, humans living within the political community are capable of being transformed through grace: grace does not deny nature but, on the contrary, perfects it.<sup>2</sup> The body politic and its successful functioning had a divine rationale, and on account of both human needs and God's purpose, its members had ethical obligations to see that it was a well-governed and secure society in which people were able to grow by grace. By using a single theological framework to define ethics and politics as the two sides of one discipline, Aquinas gave political morality a new and powerful purpose.

From the late thirteenth century, this political-ethical theology of Aquinas, with its optimistic view of the operation of grace, also taken from Augustine, inspired a style of political advice which treated politics as a part of practical theology with an emphasis on the morality of politics, especially the behaviour of the ruler. Jean-Philippe Genet has called advice which emphasized the morality of the ruler, the 'true *Miroir au prince*', the dominant example of which was the *De regimine principum*, of Giles of Rome, a pupil of Aquinas who wrote it for the future Philip IV of France.<sup>3</sup> Giles had three distinct stages of good governance for the ruler to achieve. Moving from microcosm to macrocosm, the first stage was the ruler's governance of self through education, prudence, justice, greatness of soul, truthfulness, moderation, courtesy, clemency, and other virtues. The second stage was the ruler's good governance of his own household, which similarly rested upon personal piety and moral qualities. Christine later developed this simile of the household, with its emotional connotations of intimacy, familiarity, safety, and day-to-day domestic workings, into her third 'mirror' of the dynamics of a community. The third stage of good governance in *De regimine principum* was the ruler's governing of the state, the success of which also depended upon his or her piety and morality. Thus, at every stage of good governance proposed by Giles, the political was always personal. Also, at each stage of his moralistic commentary on governance Giles inserted items of practical advice that were intended more to buttress the ruler's moral behaviour than to develop his organizational or managerial competence. In other words, the emphasis remained on the ruler's personal morality, supplemented with practical advice. The impact of Giles was considerable and by 1400 there was a well-established European mirror-for-princes genre heavily influenced by *De regimine principum*.

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<sup>2</sup> There is a convenient summary of the ideas and context in Janet Coleman, *A History of Political Thought, from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 81–87. Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) took up the ideas but with a different slant: fallen human beings are capable of being perfected, but by reason. I am indebted to my former student Rayne Allinson for this observation.

<sup>3</sup> *The III Consideracions Right Necesserye to the Good Governaunce of a Prince in Four English Political Tracts of the Later Middle Ages*, ed. by Jean-Philippe Genet, Camden Society, 4<sup>th</sup> series, 18 (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), pp. xii–xiv. Giles of Rome was a member of the Colonna family.

During the fourteenth century, chaotic and often violent political situations, incompetent governments and civic turmoil provided strong incentives to give advice more frequently and more urgently, but it also became clear that the mere moral advice of Giles of Rome was by itself insufficient, even if it were followed—which was rarely the case. In these circumstances, two other emphases became more apparent: some commentators supplemented their moral advice with even more practical advice than before and others began to describe the ways in which good and bad governance actually worked. This latter approach was conveniently illustrated by Marsilius of Padua in his *Defensor pacis* (1324) which argued that good governance required an imperial government unshackled by the involvement of the Church in politics, for only in this way could the turmoil in Europe be ended, peace restored and good governance, organization and good management be re-established. A few years later, Ambrogio Lorenzetti's frescoes in the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena (1337–1340) were dominated by allegorical depictions of political morality for rulers, but the frescoes also include detailed depictions, albeit exaggerated, of the day-to-day operations of well-governed and badly governed communities. These frescoes are visual tableaux of good actions to be cultivated and bad actions to be eschewed by those in power, and also in part by the populace. However, as we shall see, in thus depicting the dynamics of the body politic Marsilius the imperial apologist and Lorenzetti the artist were both a little ahead of their time.

During the second half of the fourteenth century as the realities of civic life made it clear that mere exhortations to princely morality were insufficient, writers of political advice looked beyond the idea that the personal morality of the ruler alone begat good governance. The items of practical guidance formerly given to supplement moral advice now became more frequent and expanded into a new style, a full-blown genre, comprising much larger and more detailed compilations of practical advice. In a letter written in 1352 to Nicolò Acciaiuoli, seneschal of Naples, Petrarch set out a series of practical points on political competence. In 1373 he wrote a 'mirror' for Francesco Carrerese, signore of Padua, discussing not only moral precepts but also practical details of defence procedures, administration, finances, food supply, moderate taxation, control of public behaviour, levels of personal debt, and how to encourage studies of the sciences and the humanities, drawing much of his advice from classical sources.<sup>4</sup> Petrarch also gave sustained practical advice in his moral compendium addressed to Luigi of Taranto on how good government could be achieved by imitating the best examples of classical times.<sup>5</sup> Even so, Petrarch's practical mirror was informed by a sense of mutuality inherent in the body

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<sup>4</sup> Petrarch, *Senilium rerum*, 14. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Petrarch, *Familares*, 12. 2. There is an English translation, *Rerum familiarum libri IX–XVI: Letters on Familiar Matters*, trans. by Aldo S. Bernardo (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).

politic. Combining John of Salisbury's metaphor of the human body's parts and Benedict's advice to abbots and other seniors in the abbey that they treat others with personal respect and affection, Petrarch argued that the ruler should love the whole citizen body 'as you do your children, or rather [...] as a member of your own body or as part of your soul'.<sup>6</sup>

As the practical mirror for princes became more frequent, some writers began to transform the first mirror, the moral mirror of Giles, by extending the moral imperatives from the ruler to the whole community. There is a striking example of this in Christine de Pizan's older English contemporary, John Gower. The reign of Richard II (1377–99) had been heavy-handed, incompetent and marked by turbulent conflict between the crown and parliament until Richard was deposed in 1399 and murdered by magnates opposed to what they perceived as his arbitrary rule. Gower's *Confessio amantis*, written between 1377 and 1381, was a desperate plea for good governance in a society disintegrating through factional aggression, civil conflict, avarice, extortion, assault, pillaging, lawlessness and gross brutality—a situation similar to that faced thirty years later by Christine in her *Livre de paix*. Gower's *Confessio* was in part a moral treatise following the style of Giles of Rome: in the search for good governance the ruler must first embrace righteousness, amend himself, and leave vice behind; when he can rule himself he must then learn to govern his own household justly, and finally, he must govern his people well.<sup>7</sup>

Yet Gower's moral mirror was not only for the eyes of princes: although he addressed the first edition of the poem to the king, it was almost certainly intended for a much wider audience for it extended moral responsibility beyond the ruler to include all members of the community.<sup>8</sup> By seeing social problems in terms of original sin, which afflicts all fallen humanity, Gower retained the ruler's morality as the basis of good governance, but at the same time widened social moral obligations to all ranks of society, to all who carry responsibility, make decisions, and exert personal authority within their own spheres of life. Gower thus democratized political morality and related good governance not only to the moral behaviour of the ruler but also to the moral behaviour of the entire body politic, as Christine was to do thirty years later.

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<sup>6</sup> Petrarch, 'How a ruler ought to govern his state', quoted in *The Earthly Republic: Italian Humanists on Government and Society*, ed. by Benjamin G. Kohl and Ronald G. Witt (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1978), p. 46.

<sup>7</sup> John Gower, *Confessio amantis*, vol. 1, Prologue, Book 1, Book 8, ed. by Russell A. Peck, trans. by Andrew Galloway (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 2000), pp. 274–75, Book 8, lines 3069–3105. Quotations are taken from this edition. For other editions see *The English Works of John Gower*, ed. by George Campbell Macaulay, vol. 1, Early English Text Society, Extra Series, 81 (London: Kegan Paul, 1900). John Gower, *Confessio amantis* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968).

<sup>8</sup> Anne Middleton, 'The Ideas of Public Poetry in the Reign of Richard II', *Speculum*, 53 (1978), 94–114, especially p. 107.

In parallel with Gower's extension of moral advice from the ruler to the wider community, practical advice was also being offered to commoners. 'Courtesy' and 'chivalric' books became more numerous towards the end of the fourteenth century, giving advice on ethics, etiquette, social behaviour, managing household servants and how to be a good parent. Some chivalric books gave moral advice on practical matters, such as the philosophy of chivalry and the responsibilities of knighthood, while others concentrated more on straightforward practical knowledge, such as military guidebooks on the personal skills of arms, keeping in training, and warfare in general, most of which was based on *De re militari* of Vegetius Renatus, the Roman writer of the fourth century AD. By the early fifteenth century, when Christine began to write, both moral and practical mirrors of advice were being directed at rulers and populace alike.

By the last decades of the fifteenth century, whether it was mainly moral or practical, and whether aimed at princes alone or also at the rest of the populace, mirror-for-princes literature began to develop advice in a third direction beyond personal morality and practical skills. Writers looked to the end product of moral and practical advice, to the ways in which all the parts of a self-contained, well-functioning community actually worked together. There is an early example of this new 'mirror' in William Langland's *Piers the Plowman* written at the same time as Gower's *Confessio*.<sup>9</sup> Langland's allegorical survey of the causes and remedies of social turmoil in all ranks of society was a moral mirror, not merely for princes but widened to reflect the populace too. As Gower had done, Langland concentrated upon the sin and vices common to all humans, democratizing, as it were, the causes of a dysfunctional body politic and the socially destructive vices that undermine good governance. He laid moral obligations upon all who carry any authority and responsibility, not merely the prince or the clergy, but everyone, including the lowest ranks. Langland's allegory then moved beyond these extensive moral admonitions to touch upon the practical problems of society. In contrast to Petrarch, however, he did not give items of matter-of-fact advice to rulers as the former had done, possibly because such items would have been inappropriate in a poetic allegory.

Langland then moved straight into an embryonic form of what was to become a third style of political commentary, the description of the actual workings of a properly functioning society. In Passus VI of the B version, Piers organized the pilgrims on his little patch so that their jobs would be done with organization and efficiency as demonstrated by his own actions. This allegorical vision of good governance is set out within the small self-contained space of Piers's half-acre, a

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<sup>9</sup>*Piers Plowman: The B Version: Will's Visions of Piers Plowman, Do-well, Do-better and Do-best*, ed. by George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson, rev. edn (London: Athlone Press; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). William Langland, *The Vision of William Concerning Piers the Plowman*, ed. by Walter W. Skeat, vol. 2, Early English Text Society, Original Series, 38 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1898), pp. ii–vi. Skeat argued that the date of composition was 1377.

household or community that demonstrated both good governance and the difficulties of achieving it. He and the pilgrims together provided a kind of exemplary real governance representative of the whole body politic. Langland was thus moving from the two moral and practical mirrors into the third and different style of advice, a mirror that described the dynamics of a small, self-contained, perfect body politic, an example of good governance in action. He had begun the process of putting into literary form the visual frescoes of Lorenzetti. A few years later, Christine de Pizan elaborated this third mirror in great detail and with distinctive literary skill.

In the meantime, both the older moralistic approach and the more recent formulations of competence and efficiency were maintained. During the 1390s or early 1400s, John Trevisa, a chaplain in the service of Thomas fourth Baron Berkeley, translated Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum* into Middle English.<sup>10</sup> Trevisa also translated Vegetius's *De re militari*, which was much more administrative and organizational than moral in nature. Trevisa's work was simply a translation and he did not work upon the ideas of Vegetius in the same way that Christine de Pizan did a few years later, nor did his translation allude to the community dynamics that Langland had used, but the fact that his patron commissioned the work shows that concepts of efficiency were in the air. In this case, since Lord Berkeley was deeply involved in politics as one of the nobles dissatisfied with the governance of Richard II, and in 1400 was one of the commissioners appointed by parliament to read the articles of deposition to the king, the patron was probably more interested in Vegetius's accounts of expertise than the translator. Certainly, contemporary practical advice to rulers placed great store on political and administrative competence, as shown by Philip Repington's long and explicit letter of 4 May 1401 to Henry IV, accusing him of carelessness and neglect of the job of restoring law and order to England with which he had been entrusted in 1399.<sup>11</sup>

The moral approach of Giles of Rome continued to flourish, principally with the *Secreta secretorum*, the supposed advice that Aristotle gave to Alexander the Great, which assumed that a ruler would govern well by virtue of his moral health. It consisted of sixty-two chapters written in the mirror-for-princes style of personal morality, sprinkled with additional practical points on personal ability and success. The work was translated several times from Latin into French and English, and once from a shortened French source into English under the title *The Secrete of Secretes*. One later version of the *Secreta secretorum* included so much practical and political

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<sup>10</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Digby 233, fols 1–182. Also, see Richard Hutton Jones, *The Royal Policy of Richard II. Absolutism in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 162–63.

<sup>11</sup> The letter is printed in Latin and English in *The Chronicle of Adam Usk, 1377–1421*, ed. and trans. by C. Given-Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 136–43.

advice that it was almost a description of the dynamics of how the body politic ought to function on a day-to-day basis, thus verging on the third type of mirror. This was the version of 1422, which James Yonge an Anglo-Irish writer translated from Latin into English for James Butler, the earl of Ormond and Henry's V's Lord Lieutenant in Ireland, under the title *The Governance of Lordschippe*. Yonge added references to Irish affairs, and refined what Judith Ferster calls the work's 'double rhetoric of deference and challenge'. More than this, he alluded to the necessity of clear intelligence for bringing about an efficient and smoothly operating society: 'the Sotilte of youre witte and the clernys of youre engyn'.<sup>12</sup> In light of the fact that Yonge was writing ten years after Christine, the similarity with which he developed earlier versions of the *Secreta secretorum* makes it tempting to speculate that he had read Christine's works and adapted her literary emphasis upon the relationship between intelligence, rationality and good governance.

By 1400 when Christine wrote her first political book, there were three distinctive styles of advice existing side by side: first, the moral advice of which Giles of Rome had been the dominant medieval practitioner, second, the style that emphasized detailed items of practical advice, and the embryonic third style, present in Langland's *Piers the Plowman*, describing the dynamic workings of the community. Commentators such as Roberto Weiss have argued that this evolution of commentaries—moving from pious moral to practical advice then to the efficient working of society—represented a transition from religious medieval political idealism to the more secular, realistic and expedient ideas of Machiavelli.<sup>13</sup> This influential interpretation has some merit but is perhaps far too simple. The developments represented rather a change of focus forced upon commentators by political disorder and violence to which they reacted by moving from, but not abandoning, morality, then enlarging practical advice, and finally developing the third mirror, which described the dynamics of a community working competently and co-operatively. It was not a transition from religious morality to secular amorality, even though it was sometimes driven by practical political needs: in England, for example, the change of focus towards pragmatic political advice and community dynamics was pushed along, as Genet observes, by the influence of the

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<sup>12</sup> For a discussion of the transmission of the text of *Secretum secretorum* see *Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconi, fasc. V, Secretum Secretorum cum glossis et notulis*, ed. by Robert Steele and A. S. Fulton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920), pp. vii–xxv. For Yonge's version (Bodleian MS Rawl. B. 490), see *Three Prose Versions of the Secreta Secretorum*, Part 1, ed. by Robert Steele, Early English Text Society, Extra Series, 74 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1898), pp. 119–248, esp. 122, 127. Also, Judith Ferster, *Fictions of Advice: The Literature and Politics of Counsel in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), ch. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Roberto Weiss, *Humanism in England during the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1967), pp. 120–21. The point is argued at length in my forthcoming book, *The Art of Good Governance in Italy and England. Tito Livio Frulovisi's 'De republica' of 1434*.



common law, political traditions and constitutional practices, which had few counterparts in France. The change can be more accurately described as a shift in emphasis from one mirror to three mirrors, from piety alone to piety and practicality, and then to the dynamics of a community. The result was a mosaic of the three mirrors, all incidentally containing echoes of the Benedictine Rule.<sup>14</sup>

These three styles of political advice existed side by side in the writings of Christine de Pizan, who used her literary talents to develop all approaches. Christine followed Giles of Rome and gave personal moral advice to princes but she also looked beyond them and offered similar advice to all members of the community. At times, she gave moral advice (whether to rulers or populace), and at other times turned to the second mirror, giving straightforward practical advice, also applicable both to rulers and the lower ranks of society. She then developed the third kind of advice which had been foreshadowed by Plato, partially expressed in literary form by monastic rules, especially that of St Benedict (with which Christine was familiar), given other forms by John of Salisbury and Marsilius of Padua, and twenty years before Christine began to write, given explicit literary expression by Langland.<sup>15</sup> She described how a well-governed community actually worked, weaving numerous details into her text, constructing a mirror that was almost a moving picture of a society working with good management, organization, competence and efficiency. She extended this description of the perfectly working society in the same way as she had also extended her moral and practical styles of advice to include the middle classes, and to a limited extent, the lower ranks of society.

Christine's earlier books began with three works, which are in some respects mirrors for princes in the older style of Giles of Rome, *Epistre Othea* (1400), *Le Livre des faits et bonnes meurs du sage roi Charles V* (1404) expounding the way in which Charles governed himself and his state (some of which she later repeated in *Le Livre de paix*) and also *L'Advison Cristine* (1405). The biography of Charles V provided an example of near contemporary good governance based upon the king's virtue (Books I and III), which consisted of his personal virtue and prudence, demonstrated when intelligence and wisdom informed and shaped political action. Christine based this blending of wisdom and action on Aristotle's view of wisdom—that the intellectual virtues of understanding, knowledge and insight can be put into action by political skills and prudence. She also used later medieval views of prudence, notably those of Aquinas and Giles of Rome, that perceived both the paths and obstacles to the vision of God, and laying upon the Christian ruler the obligation of understanding and guiding himself and the people to the divine goal. For Christine, prudence was therefore the blending of Aristotelian-Christian morality

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<sup>14</sup> *The III Consideracions*, pp. xii–xiv. During the 1320s Edward II received mirror-for-princes advice on the burdens and social consequences of his system of royal purveyance.

<sup>15</sup> For Christine's knowledge of the Benedictine Rule, see Karen Green, 'On Translating Christine as a Philosopher' in this volume, to which I am indebted.

and practicality. At the same time, Christine moved beyond the synthesis of morality and practicality by describing how the government of Charles actually operated: she described his law making, his efforts to manage the economy by keeping Paris supplied with goods and beginning a channel between the Loire and Seine rivers, and how he tried to develop a coherent foreign policy. It would be fair to say that her biography of Charles V, with its philosophic considerations and its practical details laid the foundations of her 'third mirror', describing the operating dynamics of a well-functioning society.<sup>16</sup>

Christine further developed this third mirror with her next book, *Le Livre de la cité des dames* of 1404–5, in which she moved from historical to fictional description, describing a fortified city, a community of outstanding women. It was influenced by Boccaccio's *De claris mulieribus*, but the theme also follows the biblical concept of a city built of living stones, utilized in Augustine's *City of God*. Since she was a serious and profound thinker whose works were solidly grounded in scholastic theology especially Aquinas, it is probable that she also had in mind Thomist concepts of the corporate body politic.<sup>17</sup> She also used the metaphor of the body politic employed by Plato and John of Salisbury, but writing two hundred and fifty years after John, she adapted the metaphor in quite a different way. This was partly because she faced not a tyrannical king but a weak one, and a society collapsing into greed and violence. She reacted to this social disintegration, as Langland had done briefly, by describing the interdependence of society through detailed examples showing how individual communities could, in practice, function well.<sup>18</sup> Thus, in *La Cité des dames* she described several competent, intelligent and resourceful women each of whom contributed to the efficient running and good governance of her own self-contained domestic sphere. Minerva devised the Greek alphabet, discovered how to shear sheep, card, spin and weave wool, extract juices from olives and fruit, build carts, forge armour and weapons, and make musical instruments. Queen Ceres invented the plough, knew how to clear land, harvest and grind corn, build houses and cities, and live in communities. Isis, queen of Egypt, discovered the arts of horticulture, and others developed the use of wool and flax, weaving, dyeing, tapestries, and so on. *La Cité des dames* was in the mirror-for-

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<sup>16</sup> See Michael Richarz, 'Prudence and Wisdom in Christine de Pizan's *Le livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*' in this volume as also Karen Green 'On Translating Christine'.

<sup>17</sup> Earl Jeffrey Richards, 'Somewhere Between Destructive Glosses and Chaos', in *Christine de Pizan: A Casebook*, ed. by Barbara K. Altmann and Deborah L. McGrady, Routledge Medieval Casebooks, 34 (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 43–55. Richards mainly argues that her womanly theological knowledge was a challenge to Thomist views on women, but obviously she was aware of the political concepts of Aquinas.

<sup>18</sup> Kate Langdon Forhan, 'Polycracy, Obligation and Revolt: The Body Politic in John of Salisbury and Christine of Pizan', in *Politics, Gender and Genre: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Margaret Brabant (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), pp. 33–52.

princes genre, but Christine presented it not as moral exhortation, nor even as supplementary practical advice, but as a series of descriptions of good management and working efficiently in self-contained communities.

Christine's continuation of *La Cité des dames*, *Le Livre des trois vertus*, written in 1405, is another work for women on competence and good governance within their own spheres. Xiangyun Zhang has argued convincingly that the book belongs to the mirror-for-princes genre because it gives women in differing circumstances and levels of authority advice on how to comport themselves and properly exercise their authority.<sup>19</sup> Yet, it might also be noted that Christine's advice consists of much more than the moral and practical advice found in the older mirror-for-princes genre. In this work, she developed further the third mirror of the mirror-for-princes genre, describing the good management and proper functioning of a household or a small community and the way a well-governed community actually works. Advice is given to the princess who lives, works, and sometimes governs in the context of the court; to the wife of a knight or other landed gentleman, who manages the estate when her husband was away, often for long periods, and who continued to exercise considerable responsibility even when he was at home; to merchants' wives who have their own responsibilities and duties (though in this case the advice was barbed); and to the wives of artisans and peasants. In this way, Christine defined the good governance of these women's respective domains by describing the dynamics of successful self-contained communities.

Christine made it clear that the successful functioning of a community, whether a nation, estate or household, requires good management and efficiency, but in turn, these qualities are founded on realistic analyses of both psychological and practical problems. Thus, Book III, Chapter 4 on widows commences with a hard analysis of their problems: first, the neglect of those who had previously helped them; second, demands and lawsuits made against the widow's estate or income; third, malicious gossip. The widow needed above all to be armed with good sense.<sup>20</sup> 'Tousjours parler bel et garder vostre droit' [Speak gently but look out for your rights], 'et par pou vous mesler avec divers gens se besoign ne vous en est' [avoid mingling with people more than is necessary], 'ne devez pour tant ouvrir de vostre teste n'en vostre sens vous fier, mais tout par bon conseil, par especial es grans choses que vous ne savez' [you must not try to go it alone nor trust only in your own intelligence, but get sound advice about everything especially for important things you know little about].<sup>21</sup> There is also advice on how to deal with loneliness and warnings about the

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<sup>19</sup> Xiangyun Zhang 'Du miroir des princes ou miroir des princesses: rapport intertextuel entre deux livres de Christine de Pizan', *Fifteenth Century Studies*, 22 (1996), 55–67. *Le Livre des trois vertus* is also known as *Trésor de la cité des dames*.

<sup>20</sup> 'Vous avez besoing d'estre armees de bon sens'. *Trois vertus*, III. 4, p. 189 (trans. by Lawson, p. 157).

<sup>21</sup> *Trois vertus*, III. 4, pp. 189–92 (trans. by Lawson, pp. 157–59), summarizing three remedies: accept suffering for God's sake; speak sweetly and humbly to those who attack you,

way personal feelings may compromise management. Similar comments had been made in earlier moralistic mirrors to buttress their moral exhortations, but Christine presented such advice in her own distinctive style: first, it reads as if written by someone who was writing directly from her own experience; second, it has a distinct element of practical tactics, even *realpolitik*, in the way a sweet and humble, almost monastic face must be presented to a threatening world.

In Book III, Chapter 1, she describes the management of a household, how to get jobs done well, setting out the routine of good management with a stream of details aimed at keeping the household and estate working smoothly and efficiently. A woman in charge must see to the keeping of accounts, supervise servants, and be knowledgeable about finances and warfare. The tasks of good household governance require forward planning based on consultation between husband and wife, with agreed lines of action. The wife needs to be familiar with the legal rights of domain and fief, what is owed to the lord and all other rules and customs, so that she will know what to do and will not be tricked by anyone, especially by other landlords or highly placed officials, who are deliberately dishonest and will try to get away with deceitful claims. Like any competent manager, she must know everything about her household and how the people under her command actually do things. She needs to be able to understand account books, avoid misuse of money, know about farming, the weather, agricultural techniques, see that her stewards and other supervisors oversee properly, and that her workers begin work early—to do this she must set an example and rise early herself and look out into the fields to see what happens, then later to go out into the fields to see that the work is being done properly. She should hire workers in advance for the harvest season. Then there are the sheep, the horses, the weather, the woods, gathering the winter fuel, wool and weaving clothes from wool and hemp.

The same is true of domestic governance: Christine observed that in the Netherlands skills of household management were greatly appreciated and that a competent housewife was praised because, amongst other things, a well-managed household can bring in a good profit. She says, ‘Ceste sage meisnagiere se doit cognoistre en toutes choses de meisnage, meismement en appareillier a mengier, afin que elle sache ordonner et commander a ses servans’ [The wise housewife must know everything about her household, even the preparation of food, so that she can direct and command her servants]; she must ensure that ‘ne que drappiaux a nourrices ne riens que leur apertiengne ne traine point avaul l’ostel’ [neither swadling clothes nor other nursery items are left lying around the house] and that the house ‘soit tenus nettement et toutes choses en leur place et par ordre’ [is well kept and things are in their place and in order] because this is the way things can get done

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for you may win them over; take advice ‘on how to defend yourself against those who want to beat you down’. Also, avoid the company of enemies, having nothing to do with them.

efficiently.<sup>22</sup> Once again, competence, hard work, and efficiency are the keys to good governance and a soundly functioning community.

In contrast, the wives of merchants are described as women whose pride and snobbery lead them to dress and behave in extravagant ways inappropriate to their social class. Christine's criticism of sumptuary behaviour makes interesting social commentary, but its main point is not what these women do: it is what they fail to do. They do not work to fulfil a purpose by bringing about good governance within their own domain, as do noblewomen at court and the wives of landed gentlemen who manage their estates. The merchants' wives are fulfilling no authoritative role at all and, in fact, their sumptuary imitation of the nobility is a caricature of the real exercise of authority and good governance and therefore the very antithesis of Christine's advice.<sup>23</sup> This chapter on the wives of merchants was a neat use of the 'cultivation by example' style of Trecento humanists and even the scholastic Giles of Rome and his followers, who contrasted good conduct to be emulated with examples of bad behaviour to be avoided.

Christine's realistic analyses of problems and how to deal with them assumed the moral behaviour of her reader (the first style of advice) and gave practical advice (the second style), but for the most part her analyses were directed towards an effective description of the dynamics of small, perfect communities. It is therefore not surprising that she sometimes links morality with competence so that both are directed towards the smooth functioning of the community. In her conclusion to Book III, she used the phrase 'augmentation de meurs vertueux' [the improvement of virtuous habits] meaning virtue not so much in a moral sense, but in the sense of competent and efficient management of affairs.<sup>24</sup> Her detailed descriptions of household governance in *Trois vertus* could almost be described as the operation of a lay domestic version of the Benedictine Rule's vision of the life of an ideal abbey.

Christine turned her attention towards the wider community in *Le Livre du corps de policie* written during 1406 or 1407, when conflict between the Burgundians and the Armagnacs resulted in enormous civil unrest, with jealousies at court, corrupt clergy, fighting between armies, the brutal treatment of captured towns by both sides and soldier bands plundering the countryside. Faced with this appalling situation, Christine reverted to the moral mirror of Giles of Rome, addressing herself directly to the rulers and appealing to their moral standards.<sup>25</sup> In Book I of *Corps de policie*, she emphasized Christian virtues of piety, humility, mercy, chastity and the classical virtues of liberality, justice and magnificence.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, she wrote Book II as a

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<sup>22</sup> *Trois vertus*, III. 1, p. 174.

<sup>23</sup> *Trois vertus*, III. 3, pp. 183–88.

<sup>24</sup> *Trois vertus*, III. Conclusion, p. 225.

<sup>25</sup> For this argument see Kate L. Forhan, 'Polycracy, Obligation and Revolt', and *The Political Theory of Christine de Pizan* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).

<sup>26</sup> There is the usual catalogue of virtues in Christian and classical mould, intended to

chivalric moral manual for knights, describing them in the traditional mirror-for-princes style as virtuous warriors: good at arms, steadfast, courageous and loyal, men who keep their word and were honourable towards their enemies.<sup>27</sup>

Despite its reversion to the moral mirror, *Corps de policie* did not altogether abandon Christine's earlier ideas on good governance through practical competence. She reminded the ruler 'aimer Dieu comme dit est, le craindre et servir sans faindre, et plus le servir par bonnes oeuvres faire que par moult vacquier en longue oraison' [to love, fear and serve God without dishonesty, but with good deeds rather than spending time withdrawn in long prayers].<sup>28</sup> As for ethical behaviour, she observed it could be a practical way of getting things done, for example that 'bonne guise' [good manners] included the desire to hear the truth rather than a polite covering up, and she shrewdly remarked that Hector of Troy's mercy was something 'par quoy ce lui prouffitoit tant' [by which he profited as much].<sup>29</sup> She so valued competence *per se* that she likened the qualities of a good dog to those of a first class man-at-arms. Also, in Book III she again referred to the workings of the community as a whole, in particular the responsibilities of the lower estates. Though Christine addressed the noble prince who should rule the lower orders effectively, she nevertheless frequently alluded to the dynamics of a working community in which the common people, the merchants, clergy, artisans and labourers all contributed to the efficient working of society as a community. Merchants, whose commerce brings the prosperity that enables learning and culture, must be honest, well informed and intelligent in their business, and since they are rich, they should be charitable and generous. The clergy too have a functional role in society, making it run smoothly and efficiently. Similarly, artisans must be skilful, hardworking and honest, and agricultural labourers should be esteemed and work hard. She recognized that the skills of craftsmen and labourers produce goods and food, but was careful to keep their vocational responsibility separate from any political authority. Artisans and labourers should not have a political voice: instead the burghers should exercise functional leadership and be their spokesmen, taking care of those who are below them in social rank, especially the weakest members of society.<sup>30</sup>

Christine's eye for competence and efficiency (her second mirror) and the smooth running of an organization (her third mirror) emerged again in her *Livre des faits d'armes et de chevalerie* (1409), in which she addressed the military problem of how to wage war successfully. She borrowed heavily from *Rei militaris instituta* of Vegetius Renatus who, in common with Christine, had had little military experience

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develop character, but she principally concentrates upon the value of experience, eloquence, and learning for getting things done with wisdom and prudence.

<sup>27</sup> *Corps de policie*, II, 5–21, pp. 62–89 (trans. by Forhan, pp. 63–89).

<sup>28</sup> *Corps de policie*, I, 6 p. 9 (trans. by Forhan, p. 11).

<sup>29</sup> *Corps de policie*, I, 10, 15, p. 16, p. 26 (trans. by Forhan, pp. 19, 29).

<sup>30</sup> *Corps de policie*, III, pp. 91–110 (trans. by Forhan, pp. 90–109).

but possessed a remarkably good eye for corporate competence. He placed enormous emphasis on military expertise, which was to be achieved through thorough drilling, strong discipline, the careful gathering and interpretation of information, marshalling troops in reserve, and planning and working efficiently with whatever resources are available, themes which are reflected in Christine's book. This treatise on deeds of arms and chivalry clearly reveals her cast of mind, which emphasized precise knowledge, calculated caution, and other skills of exercising authority to the 'common profit' of the community.<sup>31</sup> She has similar views about the need for careful legal preparation for action, writing with approval that Charles V had carefully consulted the jurist of the University of Bologna on his claim to exercise legal jurisdiction in Gascony.<sup>32</sup>

In 1412, in the face of worsening civil conflict, Christine wrote the *Livre de paix*. In the first part of the book she again turned away from descriptions of household and community dynamics, originally developed in *Trois vertus*. Instead, as in *Corps de policie* of 1406–1407, she now reverted to her first mirror, urgently appealing to the ruler's personal morality.<sup>33</sup> She reminded the Duke of Guyenne of the moral virtues required of a good ruler by the traditional mirror-for-princes: he was to be educated, prudent, just, magnanimous, strong, generous, merciful, and a lover of truth. Nevertheless, in Part I, Chapter 5 on prudence, and in Chapters 9–13 on the quality of advisers, there were still passages describing how competence, rational analysis and efficiency produced good governance and the smooth operations of a community. Indeed, Chapter 5 is headed with an extract from Seneca's *Epistulae morales*, 'Nulum bonum sine ratione est'.

In the second part of the *Livre de paix*, written after a lapse of nine months during which she had some terrifying experiences amid the civic tumults, she returned even more strongly to the moral exhortations to rulers: clemency towards the populace, supporting education, generosity, works of charity, giving gifts, and avoiding cruelty, greed and deceit, which are most unattractive vices in those who bear authority. The third part of the book continued to emphasize the ruler's personal morality but also contained sundry comments on management such as her warning that internal dissension was dangerous unless the head of the household takes charge

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<sup>31</sup> The works of Vegetius were read widely and influential in encouraging practical political advice that emphasized efficiency rather than virtue.

<sup>32</sup> Maurice Keen, 'Diplomacy', in *Henry V: The Practice of Kingship*, ed. by G. L. Harriss (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 181–99, esp. pp. 183–84.

<sup>33</sup> *Paix*, pp. 34–39, 52–54, contains Willard's summing up of Christine's role as a practical moralist, with comments on political disturbances, greed in public life, political qualities and good governance. Selected chapters of *Paix* are translated in *The Selected Writings of Christine de Pizan*, trans. by Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Kevin Brownlee; ed. by Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski (New York: Norton, 1997), pp. 229–46. The book was addressed to dauphin Louis, Duke of Guyenne. In the face of turbulence following the breakdown of the Treaty of Auxerre (August 1412), Christine was critical of the common people.

and restrains troublemakers, especially amongst the lower orders.<sup>34</sup> The last sixteen chapters of the *Livre de paix* continued her return to the ruler's personal morality, referring to the personal shortcomings of Louis, his anger, sexually dissolute living, sloth, his habit of ignoring subjects, and his susceptibility to flattery. In summary, the pressures of civil war led Christine to return in the *Livre de paix* to the traditional mirror-for-princes genre, although she returned from time to time to her newly developed description of the dynamics of a competent and efficient self-contained community.

We may now draw some conclusions about how Christine de Pizan's political writings connected and developed the three different mirrors of political advice. First, in accordance with the traditional mirror-for-princes literature she looked to the leader and concentrated on the ruler's personal morality, following the style that Genet called the 'true *Miroir au prince*', but she also went beyond the ruler's morality to encompass the morality of other people. Second, she wrote in the style of the second mirror, giving practical advice, notably in her *Livre des faits d'armes et de chevalerie* of 1409. The connection between the first and second mirrors is made clear by Karen Green's argument that Christine interpreted Aristotle's *phronesis* as a form of knowledge which implies action, and prudence was for her not concerned with self interest wealth, power or control, but with care and concern for that for which one has responsibility—Benedict's advice for abbots and monastic officials. Prudence is functional: the ability to nourish and maintain the smooth and successful operation of the body politic, the group, the family, and the unit. Insofar as this is a matter of self-interest, it is the self-interest or successfully accomplishing one's responsibilities for the common good as 'an intelligent moral being'.<sup>35</sup>

Finally, she developed the third style of political advice recently expounded by Langland but with older corporate roots from Plato to Aquinas. In *Le Livre des trois vertus* she created her own distinctive version of this third mirror of advice on good governance, vividly describing how the parts work together competently and efficiently. Those in positions of authority, whether governing a state or a landed estate, were given descriptive practical guidance on how to be competent, manage affairs and govern with skill. She made it plain that although skills of government were essential at the highest levels of authority, they were also required elsewhere, at

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<sup>34</sup> In this case the virtues of mercy, liberality and truth. By the exercise of these virtues the common people who had been responsible for a reign of terror during 1413, could be ruled in peace and prosperity. Once again she emphasized the importance of advisers and warns Duke Louis against those who stir up trouble under the guise of being the champion of the people (probably referring to Jean sans Peur). Such a person 'ne craindra Dieu ne sa pugnicion pour chose que il face' [neither fears God nor his punishments for what he does] (*Paix*, III. 4, p. 121).

<sup>35</sup> See Karen Green, 'On Translating Christine de Pizan as a Philosopher' and Michael Richarz, 'Prudence and wisdom' in this volume.



the lowest levels, and this included authority exercised by women as much as by men.

The circumstances in which she wrote had led Christine to use and develop all three of her mirrors, each distinct, each with its own style, but all connected, the moral mirror extending into the practical mirror, and both extending into the mirror of the dynamics of a group: just as virtue is not exclusive of deeds but the presupposition of action, so are virtue and action the presupposition of an efficiently working corporate group. She fashioned moral exhortations to rulers and extended them to the populace. She expounded the separate mirror of individual practical advice, again holding it up to both rulers and populace. Then, in effect, she subsumed both moral and practical advice into the third style of mirror-for-princes advice, a description of the community as a whole, functioning like a human body or a piece of machinery working well. Her description of the dynamics of the self-contained community or household was similar to, though not consciously drawn from, the monastic ideal of the Benedictine Rule, guided by moral precepts and operated with competence as all members worked at their tasks. Christine's communities were close-knit, smoothly working, and efficient—with an inner dynamic that required individual and team knowledge, expertise, good will and co-operation. Whenever she described the workings of these households, she was involved in creating a new kind of mirror of advice, a synthesis that retained moral and practical advice, but went beyond both, describing the efficient dynamics of a small perfect community. In some ways her descriptions were utopian and resemble Frulovisi's *De Republica* (or even his *Henry V*) and Thomas More's *Utopia*, but her concepts also had a practical side. In particular, Henry VII appreciated the practical usefulness of her *Faits d'armes et de chevalerie* sufficiently to deliver a manuscript to Caxton, desiring its translation into English, which Caxton achieved in July 1489.<sup>36</sup>

There are three concluding points. As has already been noted, the move towards political and administrative competence does not necessarily signify a transition from pious morality to realistic secularism, but rather a change from advice on personal morality (and its beneficial effects on good governance) to increasing levels of practical advice, then to advice given in the form of descriptions of working communities which operate successfully both morally and practically.<sup>37</sup> Although more secular writers such as Machiavelli used the ideas of an efficient and stable society to make distinctions between just rulers and strong rulers, the notion of an

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<sup>36</sup> *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyvalrye*, trans. by William Caxton and ed. by A. T. P. Byles, EETS, no. 189 (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. xxix.

<sup>37</sup> Kathleen Daly, 'Private Vice, Public Service? Civil Service and *Chose Publique* in Fifteenth-Century France', in *Concepts and Patterns of Service in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. by Anne Curry and Elizabeth Matthew (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2000), pp. 101–02, 105–06, 109, 113n. The article is a study of the development of the 'professional routine and expertise' in the bureaucracy.

efficient society does not in itself represent a transition from religious morality to secular *realpolitik*, for we later see many deeply religious political advisers who strongly embraced it, such as Richard Fox, Bishop of Winchester, Privy Seal and adviser to Henry VII and Henry VIII.<sup>38</sup> A second point is that the description of community dynamics portrayed by Christine placed great emphasis upon the individual's competence, contribution and dedication, themes expounded powerfully by Protestant apologists for the ideas of Christian vocation. Consequently, the resemblance between the three mirrors and the Reformed understanding of godly vocation raises possible lines of further study for historians of the Reformation. Thirdly, political advice given in terms of the dynamics of a community, such as Christine did in *Trois vertus*, was applicable to other corporate bodies, such as confraternities, universities, and colleges, and was reflected in their statutes, not the least in those of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, which Fox founded in 1516. This third style of political advice, Christine's exceptional contribution to political literature of the fifteenth century, could even be used to describe the corporate dynamics of an entire nation state, but the way in which these ideas were applied to the language of national identity and the nation state in both France and England during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is another issue altogether.

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<sup>38</sup> Barry Collett, *Female Monastic Life in Early Tudor England: With an Edition of Richard Fox's Translation of the Benedictine Rule for Women, 1517* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).

# The Living Body Politic: The Diversification of Organic Metaphors in Nicole Oresme and Christine de Pizan

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Christine de Pizan was the only political author of medieval or early modern Europe who designed an entire book—the *Livre de corps de policie* (1406)—around the theme of the body politic. Despite this, Christine's name has been invoked at best peripherally in histories of the organic metaphor. The standard scholarly accounts of the use of the bodily analogy in medieval political thought—most notably Tilman Struve's *Die Entwicklung der organologischen Staatsauffassung in Mittelalter*—have tended to concentrate on a few 'canonical' figures, such as John of Salisbury, Thomas Aquinas, Dante, Giles of Rome, and Marsilius of Padua, while ignoring Christine's contribution. Generally speaking, such scholarship highlights the unified and stable way in which the metaphor of the body was deployed, and, in particular, the themes of monarchic power, supernatural authority, hierarchy, and subordination are generally foregrounded.<sup>1</sup> Bernard Guenée summarizes a large body of literature when he declares:

To express these abstract notions of inequality, order, and hierarchy better, the Middle Ages had inherited from antiquity an image which they took great pains to render more precise and embellish and which, floating more or less consciously in everyone's mind, was an essential link in the chain of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century commonplaces: this was the organic image of society. Society as a whole was first conceived of as a human body, Christendom likewise [...]. Now this commonplace

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<sup>1</sup> Tilman Struve, *Die Entwicklung der organologischen Staatsauffassung im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1978); Antony Black, *Political Thought in Europe 1250–1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 15. See also Paul Archambault's genealogy in 'The Analogy of the "Body" in Renaissance Political Literature', *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et renaissance*, 29 (1967), 21–53 at pp. 22–32.

image is redolent with precise political interpretations. Not only did it clarify the need for inequality and hierarchy, but further reinforced the conviction that the State was more than the sum of its members, upheld the mystical notion of unity and justified monarchy without further appeal to reason [...].<sup>2</sup>

The organic metaphor functioned, in this account, as a cipher for a conception of ordered power that derived 'from above' and implied modes of strict subordination and rule.

It is hardly surprising, then, that when scholars have on occasion turned to Christine's version of the body politic, they have found echoes of these hierarchical doctrines on display. The teachings of the *Corps de policie* are commonly treated as essentially conventional, at best a 'fleshing out' of the themes of John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*—Books V and VI of which contain perhaps the quintessential medieval statement of the analogy, which apparently formed the main source for Christine's own organic ruminations.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, one modern critic of Christine, Sheila Delany, has somewhat infamously proposed that her use of the bodily metaphor signaled her essential conservatism: 'By the fifteenth century this model was sadly outmoded [...]. In a time when even courtiers and clerics wanted change, Christine continues in her quiet neo-Platonic hierarchies and her feudal nostalgia.'<sup>4</sup> On this account, the *Corps de policie* is deemed wholly unoriginal and retrograde on its own terms, a mere regurgitation of 'male-stream' political ideas that justify a politics of subordination-and-rule. Even those recent scholars who appear to challenge the tradition-bound character of Christine's organicism by demonstrating her distance from her source materials and the potential for a multivariate reading of communal animism across the range of her writings do not entirely surrender the fundamental view that the *Corps de policie*'s explicit deployment of the metaphor stands in line with earlier conventions.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Bernard Guenée, *States and Rulers in Later Medieval Europe*, trans. by Juliet Vale (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), pp. 44–45.

<sup>3</sup> See Jeannine Quillet, 'Community, Counsel and Representation', in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought, c. 350–c. 1450*, ed. by J. H. Burns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 520–72, at pp. 542–43.

<sup>4</sup> Sheila Delany, 'Mothers to Think Back Through: Who are They? The Ambiguous Example of Christine de Pizan', in *Medieval Texts and Contemporary Readers*, ed. by Laurie A. Finke and Martin B. Shichtman (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), p. 188.

<sup>5</sup> See Earl Jeffrey Richards, 'Christine de Pizan, the Conventions of Courtly Diction, and Italian Humanism', in *Reinterpreting Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Earl Jeffrey Richards and others (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), pp. 264–66; Kate Langdon Forhan, 'Polycracy, Obligation, and Revolt: The Body Politic in John of Salisbury and Christine de Pizan', in *Politics, Gender and Genre: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Margaret Brabant (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), pp. 33–52; Linda Leppig, 'The Political Rhetoric of Christine de Pizan', in *Politics, Genre and Gender*, ed. by Brabant, pp. 142–43; and Tsae Lan Lee Dow, 'Christine de Pizan and the Body Politic: Alternative Constructions of Community and Polity', presented to the 2002 American Political Science Association

In this chapter, I wish to raise some doubts about this way of approaching Christine's thought. Some social critics who adopt feminist and post-structuralist insights have already demonstrated appreciation of the inherent instability of the analogy. Moira Gatens, for example, points out that 'discourses which employ the image of the unified political body assume that the metaphor of the human body is a coherent one, and of course it's not'.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, John O'Neill (following Leonard Barkan) stresses what he calls 'the renewal of the body politic', stemming from the observation that 'from time to time the imagery of the human body is again made sharp to reassert the human shape of human beings where they are threatened by social and political forces [...]'.<sup>7</sup> While these authors propose their views in the context of modern political thought, it seems to me that this is true also of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In a longer essay, I argue that the recurrent utilization of the corporeal analogy during the later Middle Ages as a means through which to express equilibrium and equity reveals just how expansive the image could be in pre-modern times.<sup>8</sup> The application of the metaphor in such a fundamentally anti-hierarchical fashion highlights the opportunities for confounding and even subverting its more traditional versions that were endemic to the body politic itself.

This general contention is well supported in the case of the *Corps de policie*, which illustrates with particular clarity my view that the employment of the organic analogy is so various and unstable that it ultimately becomes impossible to talk about any single coherent and substantive core to 'the' idea of the body politic in the Middle Ages. But I also do not wish to imply that Christine was alone in this enterprise, to be dismissed as an outlier or eccentric. Kate Forhan has lately proposed that one of Christine's major sources for the body politic was the late fourteenth century French schoolman-courtier Nicole Oresme and his reading of Aristotle.<sup>9</sup> Oresme was very much at the centre of scholastic philosophical discourses. Yet I believe that his invocation of organic imagery, like Christine's, signalled an effort to stretch or even subvert conventional social and political doctrines. I maintain that Oresme and Christine both explore such general lines of extension (and in this they are not the only ones) by attempting to disentangle the organic metaphor from many of its hierocratic overtones. They emphasize, instead, an egalitarian, and sometimes

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<sup>6</sup> Moira Gatens, 'Corporeal Representation in/and the Body Politic', in *Cartographies: Postructuralism and the Mapping of Bodies and Selves*, ed. by Rosalyn Diprose and Robyn Ferrell (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991), p. 82.

<sup>7</sup> John O'Neill, *Five Bodies: The Shape of Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 68.

<sup>8</sup> Cary J. Nederman, 'Body Politics: The Diversification of Organic Metaphors in the Later Middle Ages', *Pensiero Politico Medievale*, 2 (2004), 59–87.

<sup>9</sup> Kate Langdon Forhan, 'Reading Backward: Aristotelianism in the Political Thought of Christine', in *Au champ des escriptures, III<sup>e</sup> Colloque international sur Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Eric Hicks and others (Paris: Champion, 2000), pp. 369–75.

an anti-clerical (or at any rate, anti-papal), sensibility. This is captured by subscription to the idea that there is a natural equilibrium within the body—a sort of equitable harmony—that must be maintained for the sake of the health and well being of the organism. Equalization means that no part of the entity can legitimately lay stake to a disproportionate amount of common resources and/or refuse to share what it possesses when required for the public good. No part (not even the clergy) is greater than the whole. The operation of the body is thus a homeostatic process, in which a premium is placed on intercommunication and exchange among the various limbs and organs themselves, as a result of which the head (or ruler) is treated as a servant of the whole rather than as a commander. The presence of these common themes in the works of Oresme and Christine does not, however, mean that their versions of the body politic are for all purposes identical and thus that Christine is again relegated to a derivative status dependent upon some male predecessor. Rather, we shall see how Christine, in joining Oresme and others in the movement away from political hierarchy and strict inequality, adds distinctive features to her presentation of the body politic that distinguish her as an important figure in the late medieval transformation of the organic analogy.

### *Nicole Oresme*

Although he has long been acknowledged as one of the towering figures of fourteenth-century philosophy, it is only during the last generation or so that Nicole Oresme has made any discernible impact among historians of political thought.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps the reason for this is that his major contributions to medieval political ideas were non-traditional in language and genre: one, a sumptuously illuminated French-language translation of and commentary on Aristotle's *Politics* (*Le Livre de politiques*); the other, a treatise of advice on monetary policy that seemed more a contribution to technical scholastic economics (*De moneta*). Oresme's long-overdue recognition, aided by the publication of useful editions of his major political works, now seems assured.<sup>11</sup> Not only was Oresme an influential figure at the court of King

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<sup>10</sup> Especially Susan M. Babbitt, *Oresme's Livre de Politiques and the France of Charles V*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 75.1 (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1985); James M. Blythe, *Ideal Government and the Mixed Constitution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 203–40; Clare Richter Sherman, *Imaging Aristotle: Verbal and Visual Representation in Fourteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Joel Kaye, *Nature and Economy in the Fourteenth Century: Money, Market Exchange, and the Emergence of Scientific Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 137–246; Cary J. Nederman, 'Community and the Rise of Commercial Society: Political Economy and Political Theory in Nicholas Oresme's *De Moneta*', *History of Political Thought*, 21 (2000), 1–15.

<sup>11</sup> *The De moneta of Nicholas Oresme*, ed. by Charles Johnson (London: Nelson, 1957); *Maistre Nicole Oresme. Le Livre de Politiques d'Aristote*, ed. by Albert D. Menut,

Charles V, but this work seems to have enjoyed a breadth of readership that few of this contemporaries could ever claim.<sup>12</sup> While Oresme certainly stands within the general tradition of late medieval Aristotelianism, we are now in a position to appreciate more fully the eclecticism of his use of sources and the distinctiveness of his interpretation and extension of Aristotle.

Perhaps nowhere is the departure from strict adherence to Aristotle more evident than in Oresme's use of organic imagery in both of his main political writings. Aristotle had made a brief observation in the *Politics* that one of the causes of constitutional change was the imperceptible growth of one part of the community—such as the poor in a democracy or polity—in relation to other parts, resulting in an asymmetry. He supports this assertion by drawing an analogy to an animate body: 'Just as the body is composed of parts, and needs to grow proportionately in order that its symmetry may remain, and if it does not it is spoiled, [...] so also a state is composed of parts, one of which grows without being noticed'.<sup>13</sup> This short passage appears to afford the inspiration for a recurring theme of Oresme's social and political theory, namely, the importance of maintaining a balance of wealth and power as a prerequisite for a tranquil and just community.

Oresme seems to have touched initially upon this implication of organic thought in *De moneta*, probably written in 1356 or 1357, a work whose important political ramifications have only lately been highlighted.<sup>14</sup> A brief tract that examines critically the practice of monetary alteration by governments, *De moneta* develops the case that money belongs to the community as a whole and therefore its value cannot be changed at the will of rulers. Indeed, Oresme holds that coin clipping and similar practices of devaluation constitute tyrannical acts that endanger the economic welfare of the realm. In order to demonstrate the difference in the order of the community when governed by a tyrant and by the true king, Oresme invokes in the penultimate chapter of *De moneta* the organic metaphor. He commences this exploration with a conventional reference to the pseudo-Plutarch *Institutio Traiani* (a work almost certainly invented by John of Salisbury to provide authority for his own views in the *Policraticus*). John's *Policraticus* circulated widely during the late fourteenth century, in its vernacular translation by Denis Foulechat in 1372. It became a popular work at the French court.<sup>15</sup> According to Oresme, Plutarch's letter to the Emperor Trajan shows how 'the republic or kingdom is thus like a sort of

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Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, n.s. 60.6 (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1970).

<sup>12</sup> Serge Lusignan, 'Intellectuels et vie politique en France à la fin du Moyen Age' in *Les philosophies morales et politiques au moyen âge*, ed. by B. Carlos Bazán, Eduardo Andújar, and Léonard G. Sbrcchi (New York, Ottawa: LEGAS, 1995), p. 270.

<sup>13</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, ed. by H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932), 1302b33–1303a3.

<sup>14</sup> Nederman, 'Community and the Rise of Commercial Society'.

<sup>15</sup> Sherman, *Imaging Aristotle*, p. 8.

human body',<sup>16</sup> the condition of which depends upon the ends toward which the ruler directs it—justice in the whole or the sectarian good of the head or some other part.

However, Oresme immediately marries this traditional, head-oriented conception of the body politic to the passage from the fifth book of Aristotle's *Politics* and transforms it into a metaphor for the economic health of the community appropriate to his discussion of currency debasement. On Oresme's presentation, the body is construed as the standard for the distribution of wealth in the community. Each segment of society must have revenues sufficient for it to perform its function, and no member may grow rich at the expense of others.

Just as the body, therefore, is badly disposed when the humours flow too freely into one member of it, so that that member is often inflamed and overgrown while others are withered and shrunken and due proportion is destroyed, and such a body cannot live long, so likewise is a community or kingdom when riches are attracted beyond measure (*ultra modum*) by one part of it.<sup>17</sup>

In particular, Oresme is concerned that debasement by the monarch will lead to a sort of hydrocephalic condition within society.

For a community or kingdom whose rulers increase their riches, power and station enormously in comparison with subjects is like a monster, like a man whose head is so large, so heavy, that it cannot be sustained by the rest of the body. And just as such a man cannot support himself or live long, so neither can a kingdom survive when its ruler draws to himself excessive riches, as is done by the mutation of money [...].<sup>18</sup>

Oresme's adaptation of the organic metaphor is striking not least for its explicitly economic interpretation of the body. The common good marked by the balanced and reciprocal relation between the parts is viewed in terms of the income received by each. Oresme apparently takes for granted that every functional part of the body is deserving of a 'natural' (or perhaps normal) measure of revenue. When one segment profits at the expense of others, the organic process breaks down. Likewise, presumably, the good health and longevity of the body is promoted and enhanced when every member receives its due. The organic metaphor on the account in *De moneta* represents not so much the proper arrangement of political power as the satisfactory distribution of economic resources. His lesson is that the superior authority of rulers is abused when they interfere with the 'natural' operations of the economic constitution of the social body. The organism ruled by the true king enjoys economic equilibrium; that governed by a tyrant enjoys no such internal balance.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Oresme, *De moneta*, p. 43.

<sup>17</sup> Oresme, *De moneta*, p. 43.

<sup>18</sup> Oresme, *De moneta*, pp. 43–44.

<sup>19</sup> Oresme, *De moneta*, pp. 44–45.



Oresme renews the application of the organic vision of the political origins of communal equilibrium in his French edition of and commentary on Book 5 of the *Politics*, which he probably composed about fifteen years after *De moneta*. Oresme's discussion of the problem of revolutionary political change departs markedly from Aristotle's text, mainly in directing attention toward the sources of public dissent in royal regimes, whereas the original concentrated on oligarchic and democratic constitutions. Broadly speaking, Oresme shares Aristotle's view that the main reason for political upheaval is inequality, in particular the belief that social rewards are unjustly distributed. But where Aristotle had regarded such grievances as reflective of a profound misunderstanding of justice itself on the part of both democrats and oligarchs, rather than as a statement of legitimate protest, Oresme apparently holds that rulers ought to heed the complaints of their subjects. In particular, he focuses on economic injustices to which members of the community rightly object, such as when a prince 'imposes taxes or exactions upon his people or lays hold of the fiscal revenues and the public treasury in order that they be applied to his own private profit and not to the common business'.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, rulers must take care to regulate the economic and social power of those under their control to ensure the maintenance of balance, following the principle of the organic body, lest disproportion engender discontent and sedition.<sup>21</sup>

In this connection, Oresme turns directly to the organic principle of communal order that he had introduced in *De moneta* and expands it at considerable length. He begins once again with reference to the *Policraticus*, presenting a sketch of the full body, ranging from the royal head, through the eyes and ears of the judges, the senatorial heart, the hands of the soldiers, down to the feet composed of the labourers. Oresme's account, while slightly less detailed than John's, captures its hierarchical overtones. But having established the design of the body politic, Oresme reasserts the principle of organic health as harmonious distribution and circulation of corporeal goods:

A body is badly disposed when one of the members attracts to itself too much of the nourishment and the humours; for in that case, it becomes too greatly out of due proportion and is too large and the other members are too small and withered and afflicted by the lack of nourishment. And as a result such a body cannot live a long time.<sup>22</sup>

All parts of the organism must share in sufficient nourishment in order to survive. This does not, of course, mean that all must have the same amount, but it does imply that no body can survive which starves some of its members while gorging others. The natural principle of equalization likewise applies to the animate community.

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<sup>20</sup> Oresme, *Le Livre de politiques d'Aristote*, p. 208.

<sup>21</sup> Oresme, *Le Livre de politiques d'Aristote*, pp. 208–09.

<sup>22</sup> Oresme, *Le Livre de politiques d'Aristote*, p. 209.

Similarly, the polity is badly ordered and cannot endure long when, whether through taxes or bad agreements or laws that are badly made or badly enforced, one of the members of the body takes too much nourishment into itself, because such a member is too large beyond just measure. And such a polity is like a monster and like a sick body.<sup>23</sup>

Oresme even finds biblical justification for this in the condemnation of the Prophet Isaiah of the collective body of the people of Israel: 'From head to foot there is not a healthy spot on your body. You are covered with bruises and sores and open wounds' (Isaiah 1. 6). According to Oresme, the egalitarian lesson to be derived from the sickness and incapacity of the body for the community is clear-cut: 'It is bad when a member of the polity passes the others immoderately in power and riches'.<sup>24</sup>

The deployment of the organic image in *Le Livre de politiques* thus echoes the central themes that Oresme had emphasized in *De moneta*: the dangers of inequality to the rule of a prince and the order of a community. The former work, however, broadens out the application of the basic principle: it is not simply the disproportionate possession of money, but any inequality in the distribution of public goods, that threatens to harm the society. *De moneta* had concentrated primarily on the ruler's manipulation of his office in order to profit himself personally at the expense of his subjects. Oresme's commentary acknowledges that this remains a problem, but it also evinces concern about the destruction of organic reciprocity that occasions any unequal distribution of primary social goods. Indeed, a crucial role of any ruler who wishes to maintain his own government without (legitimate) dissension must be the equitable regulation of the assignment of wealth and power in society. One part of the community controlling too great a stake in the whole cannot help but endanger the harmony of functions that characterizes the healthy body politic. If this is not quite an early formulation of Rawls's second principle of justice ('inequality is permitted only to the extent that it benefits all members of society equally'), then it expresses an intuition about the distribution of goods that is not too very far removed.<sup>25</sup>

### *Christine de Pizan*

In the *Corps de policie*, Christine de Pizan's presentation of the body politic certainly reflects and elaborates the emphasis on equilibrium and the consequent denial of hierocratic teachings that we have observed in Oresme. In general, her

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<sup>23</sup> Oresme, *De moneta*, p. 209.

<sup>24</sup> Oresme, *De moneta*, p. 210.

<sup>25</sup> John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 83.

work demonstrated deep concern about the needs and interests of a large portions of the populace—among them women, city-dwellers, and the poor—by insisting upon the inescapable reciprocity of the relationship between the French people and the royal regime. Christine's thought is thus characterized by the striking inclusiveness of the audience she addresses and the social complexity she acknowledges. In one of her two works directed explicitly to a female readership, the *Cité des dames*, she defends women as a group from various slanders against their intelligence and capacity to achieve moral and political virtue. The other of these writings, the *Trois vertus*, examines in minute detail the conduct appropriate to women of each and every social distinction, extending from princesses and the nobility to artisans, prostitutes, and the destitute. Likewise, Christine's *Livre de corps de police* discusses in detail the humbler orders within the realm, such as the commercial and working classes, rather than simply the education and behaviour of the king and his well-born companions.

Despite opening *Le Livre de corps de police* with a nearly verbatim description of John of Salisbury's version of the organic metaphor,<sup>26</sup> Christine constructs harmonious social organization and cooperation in an eclectic manner. While she declares that 'tout se refiere en un seul corps d'une meisme policie ensemble virve en pais et justement, si qu'il doit estre' [everyone should come together as one body of the same polity, to live justly and in peace as they ought],<sup>27</sup> the image of the animated organism also suggests to her an inclusive, reciprocal, and interdependent conception of community.

Car tout ainsi comme le corps humain n'est mie entier, mais defectueux et diffourmé quant il lui fault aucun de ses membres, semblablement ne peut le corps de policie estre parfait, entier ne sain se tous les estas dont nous traictons ne sont en bonne conjunction et union ensemble, si qu'il puissent secourir et aidier l'un a l'autre, chascun exerçant l'office de quoy il doit servir, lesquelz divers offices ne sont a tout considerer establis et ne doivent servir ne mes pour la conservation de toutes ensemble, tout ainsi comme les membres de corps humain aident a gouverner et nourrir tout le corps.

[Just as the human body is not whole, but defective and deformed, when it lacks any of its members, so the body politic cannot be perfect, whole, or healthy if all the estates of which we speak are not well joined and united together. Thus, they can aid and help each other, each exercising its own office, which diverse offices ought to serve only for the conservation of the whole community, just as the members of the body aid to guide and nourish the whole body.]<sup>28</sup>

Christine's very image of communal order is when the health of the entire public unit is preserved through the mutual coordination of the tasks necessary for its

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<sup>26</sup> *Corps de policie*, I. 1, pp. 1–2 (trans. by Forhan, p. 4).

<sup>27</sup> *Corps de policie*, II. 1, p. 57 (trans. by Forhan, p. 59).

<sup>28</sup> *Corps de policie*, III. 1, p. 91 (trans. by Forhan, p. 90).

existence.<sup>29</sup> To despise any of the members, or reduce them to a state of servitude, is an attack on the well-being of the whole organism.

Christine's use of the organic metaphor extends medieval precedent by imputing to it a noticeably anti-clerical orientation. Unlike John's *Policraticus*, she makes no reference to the religious life as the 'soul' of the body nor does she draw upon standard medieval depictions of the supremacy of the Church over the temporal sphere. Of course, she expects that the king will honour God and care for the churches within his jurisdiction. But the *Corps de policie* reverses conventional expectations by, for instance, asserting a corrective role for the good ruler, since there is no 'prelat si grand ne autre prestre ou clerc qui osera recalciter ne murmurer contre le prince s'il le reprent de son manifeste vice et pechié' [prelate, priest, or cleric (who) is so great that he will dare withstand or complain about the prince who reproves him for his manifest vice or sin].<sup>30</sup> This is consistent with Christine's conception that all the estates within the realm, including the priesthood, must submit to the communal good and her identification of the clergy within the body politic as one of the three branches of the common people.<sup>31</sup> Clearly, her organic model disposes her to count the priestly function as essentially a civil office, contributing to an idea of public welfare in which salvation and moral rectitude were not the sole aims of government.

Christine's considerable sympathy both for the contributions made by the 'humbler' classes and for the plight arising from their varied tasks constitutes a central theme of *Corps de policie*. She insists that burghers and men of commerce are not to be disdained, at least if they are honest and knowledgeable in the conduct of their affairs.<sup>32</sup>

les marchans, le quel estat de gens est tres necessaire, et sans lesquelz l'estat des roys et des princes et meismement la policie des citz et des pays ne pourroient nullement passer. Car par l'industrie de leur labour toute maniere de gent, sans ce qu'il cutivement des choses, sont poutveus par ce que iceulx marchans aportent de loins toutes choses necessaires et proprice a vivre et user a corps d'omme, et en puet finer chascun, mes qu'il ait argent.

[the merchant class is very necessary, and without it neither the estate of kings and princes nor even the politics of cities and countries could exist. For by the industry of their labor, all kinds of people are provided for without having to make everything themselves, because, if they have money, merchants bring from afar all things necessary and proper for their lives.]<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Corps de policie*, III. 1, p. 92 (trans. by Forhan, p. 91).

<sup>30</sup> *Corps de policie*, I. 7, p. 11 (trans. by Forhan, p. 14).

<sup>31</sup> *Corps de policie*, I. 10, III. 4, pp. 16, 96–98 (trans. by Forhan, pp. 19, 95–99).

<sup>32</sup> *Corps de policie*, III. 8, p. 105 (trans. by Forhan, p. 104).

<sup>33</sup> *Corps de policie*, III. 8, p. 104 (trans. by Forhan, p. 103).

Christine's commendation of merchants is noteworthy, in particular, for its assumption of the importance of the economic well-being of citizens. Traders provide an extremely useful social service, permitting a more efficient use of labour than would be otherwise possible. She maintains, 'Si est grant bien a un pais et grant richesse au prince, et meismes a la policie commune, quant une ville est marchande, et qu'il y a foison marchans' [It is very good for a country and of great value for a prince and to the common polity when a city has trade and an abundance of merchants].<sup>34</sup> Such persons 'en plusieurs pais sont tenus en grant pris' [in many countries are held in high esteem] on account of 'le bien que ilz font a un chascun' [the good they do for everyone].<sup>35</sup> In a quintessential example of organic reciprocity, Christine holds that all classes benefit when commercial society is permitted and encouraged to flourish.

In similar terms, Christine praises craftsmen and peasants, since if the republic 'oste les laboureux et ceulx qui font les mestiers, elle ne se pourra soustenir' [excluded labourers and artisans, it could not sustain itself].<sup>36</sup> Indeed, she defends both groups against the ignominy that is heaped upon them. She remarks, 'L'office d'estre home de mestier, que les clers appellent artifice, que aucuns present petit, si est-il bel et bon et necessaire' [Although some think little of the office of the craftsmen that the clerics call 'artisans', yet it is good, noble, and necessary]; likewise, 'l'estat des simples laboureux ou autres de petit estat ne fait mie tant a deprisier comme aucuns veulent dire [...] l'estat des povres que chascun desprise a moult de bonnes et sollempnez personnes en purté de vie' [the estate of the simple labourer or others of low rank should not be denigrated, as others would do [...] the estate of the poor which everyone despises has many good and worthy persons in purity of life].<sup>37</sup> Christine reasons from the necessity of the activities performed by artisans and day labourers for meeting the physical needs occasioned by human existence to the conclusion that their work must be valued by society. She speaks of 'les divers labours que font les gens de mestier qui sont necessaries a corps humain, et dont il ne se pourroit passer' [The varied jobs that the artisans do are necessary for the human body and it cannot do without them]. 'Laboureux soustiennent par leur labour le corps de toute personne' [Labourers support the body of every person with their labour], and do nothing that should be despised.<sup>38</sup> One's material contribution to the physical sustenance of the community is thus to be factored heavily into the determination of social inclusion. Judgments may be made about how well individuals perform in their diverse offices, but no office in and of itself is to be demeaned or disdained if it contributes to the community's material welfare.

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<sup>34</sup> *Corps de policie*, III. 8, p. 105 (trans. by Forhan, p. 104).

<sup>35</sup> *Corps de policie*, III. 8, p. 105 (trans. by Forhan, pp. 103–04).

<sup>36</sup> *Corps de policie*, III. 9, p. 106 (trans. by Forhan, p. 105).

<sup>37</sup> *Corps de policie*, III. 9, pp. 106, 109, 110 (trans. by Forhan, pp. 105, 108, 109).

<sup>38</sup> *Corps de policie*, III. 9, pp. 106, 108 (trans. by Forhan, pp. 105, 107).

The principle of organic equilibrium and reciprocity imposed a large burden of responsibility upon the prince, in turn, to ensure that the realm is maintained and enhanced, as well as to oversee the efficient coordination of the tasks necessary for the survival of the body politic. Christine declares that the ruler

doit vouloir que de ses subgez chascun face en paix l'office en quoy Dieu l'a establi [...] chascun en son degré vive par bonne policie sans recevoir nulle extorsion ne charge desordenee, a celle fin que ilz puissent avoir chevance convenable et vivre desoubz lui, et qu'ilz l'aiment si que bon prince doit estre aimé de son peuple.

[ought to desire that his subjects perform their best in whatever office God has placed them [...]. Each one, whatever his rank, ought to live by good policy, without extortion or overcharging, so that each may live properly under him [the prince], and that they love him as a good prince ought to be loved by his people.]<sup>39</sup>

A central duty of government, then, is to uphold the legal and social structures that permit private economic relations between individuals, that is, to protect against force and fraud. The king is to guarantee that nothing interrupts or deflects subjects from performing the various tasks necessary for the realization of the public good. This implies, moreover, that the ruler must appreciate the various duties that contribute to the health of the body, and must be cognizant of the conditions of all estates. As part of his education he ought to

oir parler aucune fois du commun, de marchans, de gent de labour, comme ilz se cheviennent et vivent, des povres, des riches, et ainsi de toutes diverses choses, a celle fin que son entendement ne soit trouvé ignorant de quelconque chose qui doie estre vertueusement sceue.

[hear sometimes about the common people, labourers, and merchants, how they make their profit from the poor and the rich, and similarly all kinds of things, so that his understanding is not found ignorant of anything that can be virtuously known.]<sup>40</sup>

Familiarity with the full range of functions needed to sustain a living organism does not breed contempt toward government. Rather, the prince who completely grasps the tasks assigned to the range of orders for the sake of the health of the realm will be prepared to guide and govern the totality knowledgeably and competently.

Perhaps the most important consequence of a harmonious organic balance is an understanding by the governors of the impact of their official policies on the conditions of the community. For example, Christine points out how soldiers 'pillage and despoil the country' leading directly to economic hardship on the part of the rural poor, because they are inadequately compensated by government. 'Se les gens d'armes feussent bien païés' [if soldiers were well paid], she observes, 'on leur pourroit et devoit-on faire tel edit que sur paine de punission riens ne prensissent sans paier' [one could restrict them on pain of punishment to take nothing without

<sup>39</sup> *Corps de policie*, I. 10, p. 16–17 (trans. by Forhan, p. 19).

<sup>40</sup> *Corps de policie*, I. 5, p. 7 (trans. by Forhan, p. 10).

paying for it] and ‘par ceste voie fineroient de vivres et de quanque leur convient mesmement a bon marchié assez et a foison’ [by this they could find provisions and everything that they needed economically and plentifully].<sup>41</sup> Likewise, the king must weigh the consequences of his taxation schemes. Christine does not deny the legitimacy of taxing subjects to meet public needs.<sup>42</sup> But he must be guided by the principle of gathering only ‘licite revenue si qu’il lui appartient a cueillir et prendre sur son pays raisonnablement sans trop pres rogner son pauvre cummun ne jusques au sanc’ [the legal revenue that it is reasonable to collect and take from his country, without gnawing to the bone his poor commoners].<sup>43</sup> Christine objects, in particular, to the inequities of royal taxation policies, which exempt the rich while burdening the poor disproportionately. It is not merely that such schemes are unjust, but that they have materially deleterious effects upon those who are already impoverished:

Maint en y a quant vient a faire la finance de paier tel argent a quoy ilz sont imposez, dont leur fault jeuner après eulx et leur povre maingnaige, en vendre leur lit ou chosettes a grant marchié et pour neant, et que plaist a Dieu que de ce fussent bien le roy et les nobles princes de France informez.

[There are some who come to pay this money imposed on them and then they and their poor household starve afterwards, and sell their beds and other poor possessions cheaply and for nothing. And it would please God if someone informed the king and noble princes.]<sup>44</sup>

As a consequence of the organic unity of the realm, the ruler must realize that his own actions may directly harm the material well-being of his subjects, which in the end will only redound to his own injury, since the people’s despoilment means that the realm itself will become impoverished and will generate less income in the future. Christine takes it as axiomatic that wise princes ‘avoient plus chier a ester povres en riche empire que ester riches et plains en povre contree’ [would rather be poor in a rich country than be rich and have plenty in a poor country].<sup>45</sup> This is not merely a moral principle; it reflects an economic doctrine that naturally follows from an organic conception of communal interdependence. A balanced body politic is one in which government frames all of its policies with consideration for their consequences upon the sum of the members of society, and especially upon those who are most vulnerable to the use of power and least able to protect themselves. In this way, Christine extends the more equitable line of organic thinking that she may have taken from Oresme.

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<sup>41</sup> *Corps de policie*, I. 9, pp. 14–15 (trans. by Forhan, p. 17).

<sup>42</sup> *Corps de policie*, I. 11, p. 17 (trans. by Forhan, pp. 19–20).

<sup>43</sup> *Corps de policie*, I. 11, p. 17 (trans. by Forhan, p. 19).

<sup>44</sup> *Corps de policie*, I. 11, p. 20 (trans. by Forhan, p. 18).

<sup>45</sup> *Corps de policie*, I. 12, p. 20 (trans. by Forhan, p. 22).

## Conclusion

The impression that one often receives from the scholarly literature on the history of the body politic is of a static and lifeless metaphor that has been deployed to express a single monotonous point about hierarchy and subordination. But the way in which Nicole Oresme and Christine de Pizan utilized the corporeal analogy during the later Middle Ages, as a means through which to express equilibrium and equity, reveals just how capacious the image could be. The application of the metaphor in such a fundamentally anti-hierarchical fashion highlights the opportunities for confounding and even subverting its more traditional versions that were endemic to the body politic itself. Oresme and Christine were fully cognizant of the ‘incoherence’ of a unified body and the possibilities for its reshaping. In this regard, there are clear and inarguable similarities in the political and philosophical principles that inform their respective applications of the organic metaphor.

Two points need to be emphasized about the matter of similarity, however. First, much of what Christine and Oresme share may also be found in both preceding and successive theorists who draw upon the organic metaphor, including (but not limited to) the anonymous *Antequam essent clerici*, Marsilius of Padua’s *Defensor pacis*, Nicholas of Cusa’s *De concordantia catholica*, and John Fortescue’s *De laudibus legum Angliae*, as well popular preachers such as the fifteenth-century Franciscan Bernardino of Siena. All of these figures and texts may be shown to deploy the analogy in roughly the same ‘egalitarian’ or homeostatic manner that have been encountered in the writings of Christine and Oresme. So it is perhaps best to view the latter as forming part of a broad (albeit wholly informal) intellectual movement (a ‘tradition’ in only the loosest sense) during the later Middle Ages that aimed to revise and extend the body politic in creative new ways.

Second, Christine’s version of the organic community—even when placed in relief against Oresme’s—possesses features that are unique to it. Oresme consistently sketches a circulatory image of the body politic, stressing the need to ‘normalize’ the flow of fluids between the various parts so as to prevent unhealthy ‘enlargements’. By contrast, Christine is more anatomical in her approach, stressing the need for the limbs and organs to cooperate in their active coordination and intercommunication of functions. Christine’s account in the *Corps de policie* is also more self-consciously inclusive, demonstrating a genuine sympathy (which is arguably typical of much of her work) for the condition of the lowest and least members of society for their own sake. All of these factors explain Christine’s insistence upon proffering advice to all the parts of the body politic concerning their proper and appropriate roles and conduct. By contrast, Oresme’s perspective seems to be more exclusively that of the prince, who must ‘manage’ the people and resources within his purview in order to assure the stability of his own reign. These differences are not mere matters of trivial detail, I think. Rather, they portend two theorists whose real commonalities nonetheless permit sufficient leeway for each to explore his or her own immediate concerns and political agendas. Hence, Oresme



tends to highlight the direction of the head as the central source of reciprocal co-operation; the head directs the flow of circulation within the creature toward the attainment of a collective good. By contrast, Christine's interpretation of the organism inclines to view the head as dependent upon the co-operation of the bodily parts and looks to homeostasis to co-ordinate the members. The head therefore occupies a secondary role in determining the substance of the common good and how it is to be attained: the head is more a traffic cop than a physician. With Christine's idea of the body politic, as with all such images, it is therefore crucially important to be attuned to the unique elements that characterize it as well as the dimensions shared with other sources.



# Christinian Politics, the Tavern, and Urban Revolt in Late Medieval France

SUSAN J. DUDASH

If all the world were a theatre, the tavern would have been the playwright's atelier. There, characters convened and myriad intrigues were conceived before taking centre stage and spilling out onto the streets of medieval France. Both were, in a sense, *carrefours*—places where, for a time, a variety of peoples intersected and interconnected.<sup>1</sup> The medieval tavern in particular was an ambiguous space, a crossroads of many sorts.<sup>2</sup>

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The final version of this paper has benefited from the participants' remarks on earlier versions of my research, presented at the annual meeting of the Medieval Academy of America (2002), a conference on Christine de Pizan's political philosophy at Monash University, and the 5<sup>ième</sup> colloque international sur Christine de Pizan (both held in 2003). For their many helpful suggestions and guidance, I am especially indebted to Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Cary Nederman, Christine Reno, and Barbara Hanawalt. My thanks also go to Constant Mews and Karen Green for their many kindnesses, as well as the anonymous reviewer for this volume. This essay has been much improved by their insight.

<sup>1</sup> On intersections or crossroads, see the essays in *Bodies and Disciplines: Intersections of Literature and History in Fifteenth-Century England*, ed. by Barbara A. Hanawalt and David Wallace (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), esp. Barbara A. Hanawalt and David Wallace, 'Introduction', pp. ix–xii, and Paul Strohm, 'Afterword: What Happens at Intersections?' pp. 223–32, as well as Hanawalt's provocative essay, 'The Host, the Law, and the Ambiguous Space of Medieval London Taverns', in *Medieval Crime and Social Control*, ed. by Barbara A. Hanawalt and David Wallace (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), pp. 204–23.

<sup>2</sup> See Hanawalt, 'The Host', pp. 204–05. Little differentiation was made between taverns, inns, and alehouses in the late medieval period (usually taverns sold wine and ale, while alehouses sold only ale). By the sixteenth century, however, an English statute distinguished between alehouses at the lower end of the social scale, inns at the upper end, and taverns in

Logistically, the institution was often found at locations of transition—between ecclesiastic and secular worlds, for example, near sites of pilgrimage or on the doorstep of churches; or at the juncture of military and lay spheres, across from army barracks or near ports, where they also served as temporary lodging for prisoners of war or hostages. They were similarly found along the boundaries of urban and rural domains, along major trade and travel routes and at city gates.<sup>3</sup> In the urban setting—where mercantile, middle class society was born—the tavern proliferated beside market places and schools. In the temporal sphere, as a place for momentary respite and refreshment, the tavern bridged the gap between the public domain, where hospitality was provided by a merchant for a fee, and the domestic arena of the familial or feminine hearth.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, for the weary traveller, the taverner or tapster served as more than a temporary host. Like the head of a domestic household, and as in an earlier form of courtly or religious hospitality which would continue to exist alongside it in certain milieux and which persists even today in some isolated regions, the proprietor of the establishment welcomed guests as a father or mother figure would an adopted child.<sup>5</sup> More specifically, in the case of medieval England,

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between. All served drink, while most also provided lodgings of some sort. See Peter Clark, *The English Alehouse: A Social History, 1200–1830* (London: Longman, 1983), p. 5; Hanawalt, 'The Host', p. 221, n. 12, and Andrew Cowell, *At Play in the Tavern: Signs, Coins, and Bodies in the Middle Ages* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), p. 29, n. 22, on the distinction between the tavern and the auberge. See also Claude Gauvard, '*De grace especial*': *Crime, état et société en France à la fin du Moyen Âge*, 2 vols (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1991), I, pp. 284–86. This essay forms part of a larger study which investigates the myriad incarnations of the tavern in late medieval France.

<sup>3</sup> Cowell, *At Play*, p. 48 and Noël Coulet, 'Inns and Taverns', in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. by Joseph R. Strayer and others (New York: Scribner, 1982–89), VI (1985), 468–77 (p. 469).

<sup>4</sup> On the association of the tavern with the female domain and its subsequent demonization, see Ralph Hanna III, 'Pilate's Voice/Shirley's Case', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 91 (1992), 793–812 (p. 810) and Barbara A. Hanawalt and David Wallace, 'Introduction', in *Medieval Crime*, ed. by Hanawalt and Wallace, pp. ix–xvi (p. xv). Hanawalt's research, based in part on the findings of Martine Segalen, examines the gendered division of labour in the period, highlighting brewing and spinning as potential by-occupations of the female-centred domestic arena; see Hanawalt, 'The Host', pp. 205–06; Barbara A. Hanawalt, 'Introduction', in *Women and Work in Preindustrial Europe*, ed. by Barbara A. Hanawalt (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. vii–xviii (pp. xiv–xvi); and Martine Segalen, *Mari et femme dans la société paysanne* (Paris: Flammarion, 1980). See also Ralph Hanna III, 'Brewing Trouble: On Literature and History—and Alewives', in *Bodies and Disciplines*, ed. by Hanawalt and Wallace, pp. 1–17 at p. 1 and Gauvard, '*De grace especial*', I, pp. 281 and 284–86.

<sup>5</sup> For the case in England, see Hanawalt, 'The Host', pp. 205–06. On the application of the Benedictine Rule of hospitality in medieval French literature and society, see for example, Cowell, *At Play*, pp. 38–46 and Edoardo Esposito, 'Les formes d'hospitalité dans le roman courtois (du *Roman de Thèbes* à Chrétien de Troyes)', *Romania*, 103 (1982), 197–234.

for example, a host would have been expected to take extensive legal responsibility for those who spent the night under his roof, as Barbara A. Hanawalt, and in more general terms, Hans Conrad Peyer, have shown.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, like the head of a domestic household, the taverner and tapster would vouchsafe for the good character and reputation of those in their care, and would, in turn, provide a temporary safe haven and other services for their charges, as required.<sup>7</sup> The tavern was a neutral zone in many senses of the word.

The institution may have developed in response to the over-taxation of rural denizens forced to provide hospitality to roaming soldiers or travelling nobles and pilgrims, but the space defied the conventional ordering of society and took on a decidedly non-noble flavour.<sup>8</sup> The tavern was the domain of the merchant who, like the street vendor, loudly hawked tempting victuals, ales, and wines, or served as a steward of other services. As such, it was a new institution that reflected a burgeoning market economy, one which supported the food and hostelry trade as a profit-driven institution.<sup>9</sup> Finally, the medieval tavern, much as contemporary equivalents do today, served as a common meeting place for the inhabitants of a

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<sup>6</sup> Hanawalt, 'The Host', pp. 204–06 and 214–16 and Hans Conrad Peyer, 'The Origins of Public Hostelry in Europe' in *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*, ed. by Jean-Louis Flandrin and others, trans. by Clarissa Botsford and others (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 287–94. Then, as now, attempts to cut off a patron's drinking, ostensibly to avoid further trouble, could lead to blows; see Gauvard, 'De grace especial', II, p. 644.

<sup>7</sup> Hanawalt and Wallace, 'Introduction', in *Medieval Crime*, ed. by Hanawalt and Wallace, p. xv. On the innkeeper's own reputation, see F. R. P. Akehurst, 'Good Name, Reputation, and Notoriety in French Customary Law', in *Fama: The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Thelma Fenster and Daniel Lord Smail (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), pp. 75–94 (p. 81). On the conflation of public and private spheres and vagrancy in early modern England, as well as the ballads inspired by alehouses, taverns, and drink, see Patricia Fumerton, 'Not Home: Alehouses, Ballads, and the Vagrant Husband in Early Modern England', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 32 (2002), 493–518. According to Fumerton, the site may have served as an alternate home for the unemployed and poor, who appeared as clientele and tipplers alike (pp. 494–96). At least in the case of Renaissance England, poverty could force some to resort to selling beer or ale and poverty laws and alehouse licensing were inextricably linked; see Theodore B. Leinwand, 'Spongy Plebs, Mighty Lords, and the Dynamics of the Alehouse', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 19 (1989), 159–84 (pp. 163–65). Paradoxically, the establishments may thus have contributed to the very unrest that they sought to alleviate and tipplers were charged to keep the peace.

<sup>8</sup> On the institution's genesis, see Peyer, 'The Origins,' p. 290; on the equalizing force of the establishment, see, for example, Cowell, *At Play*, pp. 31 and 36–37 and Fumerton, 'Not Home', p. 506. On the tavern as a place that defied social class conventions, see Hanawalt, 'The Host', p. 204.

<sup>9</sup> See Cowell, *At Play*, p. 3.

given area, one in which business transactions could be settled or the day's toils washed away with a refreshing draught.<sup>10</sup> Whether by accident or design, the tavern became the locus where a wide variety of peoples, social classes, and beliefs could interconnect. As such, the tavern housed—and perhaps even emblematically figured—the volatile situation brought about by late medieval changing class structures.<sup>11</sup>

In its earliest manifestations, Roger Dragonetti (referring to the *poète infortuné*, Rutebeuf), has gone so far as to classify the tavern, in the period preceding Jean de Meun and the *Roman de la Rose*, as the classic image of the poet's atelier.<sup>12</sup> More commonly, however, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the tavern formed the backdrop for a number of comedies, plays, and miracles tales, veiled in allegory, but serving didactic purposes.<sup>13</sup> According to the critic Jean Dufournet, the French

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<sup>10</sup> See Hanawalt, 'The Host', p. 211. Leinwand, referring to Clark's work on early modern England, qualifies the establishment more as a site apart for business and revelry among the lower orders rather than as a seat of political discontent (Leinwand, 'Spongy Plebs', p. 166 and Clark, *The English Alehouse*, pp. 152–54 and 157–58). Leinwand seems to be implying, then, that it was the intermingling of classes or perhaps even the presence of the middle and upper classes that tied the establishment to political unrest. Claude Gauvard's research on the fifteenth-century French record supports this view. Secular and ecclesiastical worlds similarly collided within the tavern's walls, with murderous results. See Gauvard, '*De grace especial*', I, p. 259.

<sup>11</sup> On the potential disorder associated with the tavern, see Hanawalt, 'The Host', pp. 211–14, whose observation, that peaceful transactions were not likely reported with the frequency of the deals which led to disorder, is especially noteworthy. For the relationship between poverty, drink, taverns and alehouses, and their threat to established hierarchies in Renaissance England, see also Leinwand, 'Spongy Plebs', pp. 159–63. Contemporary sources indicate that the prevailing anti-drunkenness laws clearly targeted the common classes, who drank more affordable beer or ale as opposed to the more costly wine consumed by the nobles. While the street may have been the privileged theatre of crime, to borrow Gauvard's expression, we must recall that the disputes often began within the taverns' walls, taking to the streets only when things came to blows. As with the home, the walls of the tavern offered some symbolic protection. See '*De grace especial*', I, pp. 277–78, 284–85, and 293–94 in general, and pp. 396 and 399 on clerics; see II, pp. 516, 562, and 737 on the locations of late medieval French crimes, of which nearly 40% occurred in the street and only about 10% took place within the tavern itself, thus privileging the public domain as a criminal space.

<sup>12</sup> Roger Dragonetti, '*Le Jeu de saint Nicolas* de Jean Bodel', in *The Craft of Fiction: Essays in Medieval Poetics* (Rochester, MI: Solaris Press, 1984), pp. 369–91 and Jean Dufournet, 'Variations sur un motif: La taverne dans le théâtre arrageois du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle', in *Farai chansoneta novele: Essais sur la liberté créatrice au Moyen Age*, ed. by Huguette Legros (Caen: Université de Caen Press, 1989), pp. 161–74 at p. 165. Note the urban character of this site (Cowell, *At Play*, p. 180).

<sup>13</sup> According to Andrew Cowell, the tavern was 'the single most important locale of thirteenth-century dramas written in Arras'; it was one of the dominant settings for Rutebeuf's

dramatist Jean Bodel initiated the use of the tavern in its literary incarnation as home to the hypocritical innkeeper and site of trouble, trickery, fraud, gambling, and gaming in his *Jeu de Saint Nicolas*, for example.<sup>14</sup> It served as the otherworldly site in which the fool felt at home and the poor gambler and the Devil did battle for the human soul in a neutral arena. In ecclesiastical discourse, the institution took shape as a locus of transgression, as Andrew Cowell has demonstrated.<sup>15</sup> From its literary début, the tavern was likewise the scene of contention.

And yet, even at this early date in medieval literature, the tavern was, as an institution, seldom portrayed as being frequented by the aristocracy. The confrontational element of tavern discourse would curiously be dropped by Bodel's successors, such as Adam de la Halle in his *Jeu de la Feuillée*, most likely in favour of more overtly religious messages.<sup>16</sup> Yet, the struggle between his personifications of Cité, the past and outmoded tradition, and Ville, or expanding prosperity, should not be overlooked as an important precursor to Christine's rabble-rousing social climbers.<sup>17</sup> The tavern was a locus where past and present collided. For late fourteenth- or early fifteenth-century secular and ecclesiastical writers, the medieval tavern may well have been the site of life (and afterlife-) altering events.

To believe Christine de Pizan, the tavern was the meeting place of choice for seditious rebels, bourgeois upstarts, and lazy, loitering workers—the locus of social turmoil par excellence. Moreover, the institution was commonly associated with the production of evil speech acts, only one element of which was the defamation of women who may or may not have frequented it.<sup>18</sup> According to Hanawalt, 'Every

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poems of misfortune, as well as for the fabliaux and goliard poems; see Cowell, *At Play*, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Dufournet, 'Variations', pp. 161–74. On the conflation of the commonplace, Arrageois tavern and exotic, Saracen lands; the juxtaposition of court and common discourses; and the tavern as the centre of conflict in *Li Jeus de Saint Nicolai* (1191–1202) see David Raybin, 'The Court and the Tavern: Bourgeois Discourse in *Li Jeus de Saint Nicolai*', *Viator*, 19 (1988), 177–92. See also Cowell, *At Play*, Chapter 2.

<sup>15</sup> Cowell, *At Play*, pp. 8–9.

<sup>16</sup> Dufournet, 'Variations', p. 163.

<sup>17</sup> Similarly, the anonymous *Courtois d'Arras*, opposes tavern and country (versus the tavern and palace, as in the parable of the prodigal son [Luke 15], which inspired it); see Dufournet, 'Variations', p. 168.

<sup>18</sup> See Gauvard's research in 'De grace especial', I, pp. 372 and 463 on arguments, blasphemy, and defamation in French taverns; on treasonous speech, see II, p. 729. Across the Channel, unlicensed discourse leading to the Peasant Revolt of 1381 condemned an entire class, and tavern speech like jangling, flying (quarrelling), and tavern songs were equally suspect, politically and morally. See Hanna, 'Brewing Trouble', pp. 6–8 and 'Pilate's Voice', pp. 798–99 and pp. 809–10, n. 13 (see n. 4 above for both sources). Note that 'sins of the tongue' were especially troublesome offences, appearing frequently in the court records of early fifteenth-century England. There is reason to believe that the case would have been

female role associated with taverns [...] implied tainted womanhood'.<sup>19</sup> Given Christine's life-long devotion to the rehabilitation of the female reputation, the implications alone of such potential associations for women are damning.<sup>20</sup> Yet an even farther-reaching cultural criticism is at work in her corpus.

As Ralph Hanna III has shown in his study, 'Brewing Trouble: On Literature and History—and Alewives', in part a reaction to Judith M. Bennett's research on women and ale production, invectives against taverns may have been composed to corroborate the belief that one should work to earn one's living (presumably with

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similar on the continent. *Jacob's Well*, a mid-fifteenth century redaction of Lorens d'Orléans' thirteenth-century French *Somme le Roi*, a conduct book on the vices and virtues, classifies ten different varieties of these speech sins under the heading of gluttony, an important element of anti-tavern invectives, as we shall see. See Marjorie K. McIntosh, 'Finding Language for Misconduct: Jurors in Fifteenth-Century Local Courts', in *Bodies and Disciplines*, ed. by Hanawalt and Wallace, pp. 87–122 at p. 94; see also p. 101. See also Sandy Bardsley, 'Sin, Speech, and Scolding in Late Medieval England' in *Fama*, ed. by Fenster and Smail (see n. 7 above), pp. 145–64 (p. 153) and in the same volume, Thelma Fenster and Daniel Lord Smail, 'Introduction', pp. 1–11 (p. 9). On the relationship between taverns and prostitutes in high medieval French literature, as well as their link to pride, as a sign of gluttony, see Cowell, *At Play*, Chapter 3, esp. pp. 126–55 and 192–94. See also Susan J. Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan and the "menu peuple"', *Speculum*, 78 (2003), 788–831 (pp. 811–15). My forthcoming article, 'Social Class, Vice, and Gluttony in Christine de Pizan', explores the relationship between social status and sin in greater detail.

<sup>19</sup> 'The Host', p. 208; see also pp. 209–10. With respect to the French literature of the period, note, for example, the thirteenth-century satirical poem, 'Des fames, des dez et de la taverne', which mixes French and Latin tongues, along with women and taverns, and parodied prayers; see *Recherches et créations latino-romanes*, ed. by V. Väänänen (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1981), pp. 365–74. Dufournet cites several stanzas of the poem in 'Variations', p. 168. In contrast, Natalie Zemon Davis notes the import of some Lyonnais hostesses in the sixteenth century, one of whom even offered her inn as a place for Protestant worship; see her 'Women in the Crafts in Sixteenth-Century Lyon' in *Women and Work*, ed. by Hanawalt (see n. 4 above), pp. 167–97 (pp. 182–83). Such associations would only further underscore the tavern as a locus of contention and social discord. Whether in France, England, or Germany, the numbers of brewsters were significant; the inverse correlation between their work and their representation or reputation is therefore all the more provocative. In *Women and Work*, ed. by Hanawalt, see also, Maryanne Kowaleski, 'Women's Work in a Market Town: Exeter in the Late Fourteenth Century', pp. 145–64 (pp. 147–51), where brewsters outnumber prostitutes three to one and form the second largest group of working women after servants; and Martha C. Howell, 'Women, the Family Economy, and the Structures of Market Production in Cities of Northern Europe during the Late Middle Ages', pp. 198–222 (pp. 213 and 215–16). Women not only worked, but also drank within tavern walls. For the case in France, see Gauvard, 'De grace especial', I, p. 310.

<sup>20</sup> On the relationship between male and female honour, rumour, and the tavern, see Gauvard, 'De grace especial', I, p. 321 and II, pp. 666 and 706.



little profit to spare for such purposes as drink).<sup>21</sup> For our purposes, a look at the problematics of the tavern in the wider context of Christine's political thought illuminates her view of the role and function of the 'menu peuple' in French society, the focus of this paper. While the author often presents herself as an intercessor between the noble, chivalric class, and the populace, her precise position vis-à-vis the people is nuanced and shifts from work to work. Before turning to our examination of Christine's texts, however, we must first address an important issue which underlies her writing and which derives from the medieval controversies over changing class structures: the author's own vocabulary of the people and the estates.

Christine must have been aware of the changing nature of the conceptualization of the divisions of society, for she made repeated attempts at categorization and definition throughout her works. Of particular significance in this regard is her mirror for princes, *Le Livre du corps de policie* of 1406–07, in which Christine defines her terms most clearly.<sup>22</sup> The term 'peuple', for instance, designates all non-privileged, non-noble inhabitants of a nation, often signalled by a term denoting the universal or comprehensive nature of the group as in 'l'université de tout le peuple'.<sup>23</sup> After princes and nobles or 'chevalereux', it is these 'subgiez et peuple' who form the third of Christine's worldly estates (princes, knights, people).<sup>24</sup> Note

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<sup>21</sup> Hanna, 'Brewing Trouble', pp. 4–5, 7–8, and 10 and Judith M. Bennett, 'Misogyny, Popular Culture, and Women's Work', *History Workshop*, 31 (1991), 166–88 and 'The Village Ale-wife: Women and Brewing in Fourteenth-Century England', in *Women and Work*, ed. by Barbara Hanawalt, pp. 20–36. Bennett posits, in particular, that women were forced from the relatively lucrative and independent trade of ale production by cultural pressures that vilified them along with drink and sought to exclude them from the profession ('Misogyny', esp. pp. 168–69, 179–80, and 183). See also Bennett's *Women in the Medieval English Countryside: Gender and Household in Brigstock before the Plague* (London: Oxford University Press, 1987) and Richard W. Unger, *Beer in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 134–35, 223–28, and Chapter 12.

<sup>22</sup> References are to the following editions: *Le Livre de l'advison Cristine*, ed. by Christine Reno and Liliane Dulac (Paris: Champion, 2001), *Le Livre du corps de policie*, ed. by Angus J. Kennedy, *Etudes christiniennes*, 1 (Paris: Champion, 1989), *Le Livre de la mutacion de Fortune*, ed. by Suzanne Solente, 4 vols (Paris: Picard, 1959–66), *The 'Livre de la paix' of Christine de Pisan: A Critical Edition*, ed. by Charity Cannon Willard ('s-Gravenhague: Mouton, 1958), and *Le Livre des trois vertus: édition critique*, ed. by Charity Cannon Willard and Eric Hicks, *Bibliothèque du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 50 (Paris: Champion, 1989). Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. The details regarding Christine's definition of the people have been drawn from Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', pp. 791–96.

<sup>23</sup> *Corps de policie*, I. 1, p. 1; see also III. 1–2, pp. 91–92; and III. 11, p. 111.

<sup>24</sup> Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', p. 791, n. 9; Johan Huizinga's classic study, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans. by Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), at pp. 62–65, explores contemporary usage of the term 'estate' in a variety of contexts, including the works of court historiographer Georges Chastellain, in which *bourgeois* and worker are members of the same, third political estate; see *Œuvres de*

that we are here referring, not to the older tripartite division of clergy, nobility, and people, but to a newer incarnation of that society: princes, nobles, and all non-noble beings. Particularly relevant to our discussion, this latter group is subdivided even further: 'la communauté du peuple sont compris trois estats, c'est a savoir par especial en la cité de Paris et autres citez, le clergié, lez bourgeois et marchans, et puis le commun come gens de mestier et laboureurs' [The community of people is comprized of three estates; especially in the city of Paris and other cities these are: clerics; *bourgeois* and merchants; and then the common people, such as craftsmen and labourers].<sup>25</sup> Note that the *bourgeois* are defined specifically as 'les principaux demourans et habitans es villes' [the principal residents and inhabitants of the towns] or 'citoiens' [citizens].<sup>26</sup> The expression 'third estate' may therefore refer to either the broader group of non-nobles or the narrower one of labourers and artisans.<sup>27</sup>

As a point of comparison, her contemporary and colleague, Eustache Deschamps, made similar attempts to categorize and define society's members. In his 'Lay des douze estats du monde', for example, he lists learned men, knights, and labourers first, followed by such groups as judges, artisans, merchants, and innkeepers, a category in their own right.<sup>28</sup> For Deschamps, the defining characteristic was one of aristocratic birthright, not economic standing.<sup>29</sup> As in Christine's works, all non-

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*Georges Chastellain*, ed. by Kervyn de Lettenhove, 8 vols (Brussels: Huessner, 1863–66).

<sup>25</sup> *Corps de police*, III. 4, p. 96. Christine's 'clergié' are the 'clers estudiens es sciences'.

<sup>26</sup> *Corps de police*, III. 6, p. 100; compare III. 8, pp. 104–05 on merchants; see Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', p. 791, n. 10.

<sup>27</sup> In Christine's works, some members of the bourgeoisie may resemble the nobility, as may some merchants; *Corps de police*, III. 6, p. 100; on merchants, see III. 8, p. 105. See Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', pp. 791–92, n. 11.

<sup>28</sup> Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', p. 792; Eustache Deschamps, *Œuvres complètes d'Eustache Deschamps publiées d'après le manuscrit de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, ed. by Le Marquis de Queux de Saint-Hilaire and Guy Raynaud, Société des anciens textes français, 11 vols (Paris, 1878–1903), II, 226–35 at pp. 226–27. Lawyer-clerks, notaries, physicians, priests, and kings round out the veteran campaigner and royal official's list. See Jean Batany, 'Les estats du monde' chez Eustache Deschamps: des structures sociales aux catalogues de métiers', in *Autour d'Eustache Deschamps: Actes du colloque du Centre d'études médiévales de l'Université de Picardie-Jules Verne, Amiens, 5–8 novembre 1998*, ed. by Danielle Buschinger, Médiévales, 2 (Amiens: Presses du 'Centre d'Etudes Médiévales', 1999), pp. 1–14; for a brief overview of the changing vocabulary of the estates in the mid-fourteenth century, see pp. 1–2. Note that the social influence of tavern keepers was officially recognized in mid-twelfth-century France when Count Thibault IV of Chartres established regulations to govern their guild; see Françoise Desportes, 'Food Trades' in *Food*, ed. by Jean-Louis Flandrin and others (see n. 6 above), pp. 275–86 (p. 276) and Unger, *Beer*, pp. 179–80, 209, and 213–14.

<sup>29</sup> Thierry Lassabatère, 'Le bon gouvernement selon Eustache Deschamps' (master's thesis, University of Paris IV–Sorbonne, 1992), p. 14; Deschamps, *Œuvres complètes*, VI, pp. 25–27

nobles may be classed among the ‘menu peuple.’<sup>30</sup> To avoid any potential terminological confusion, we shall use the expression ‘menu peuple’ when discussing the non-noble estates in general throughout this paper.

This distinction is important to our understanding not only of the people as they are represented and reflected in Christine’s political writings, but also to our comprehension of the author’s indictment of the institution known as the tavern and the incidence of popular rebellion. Like Christine’s terminology, the medieval tavern was an establishment which tended to dissolve social difference and to bond host and guest (merchant or *bourgeois* and labourer), solidifying class membership and unity.<sup>31</sup> In Christine’s *Corps de policie*, the ‘menu peuple’ form a homogenous, relatively safe group.

While the people may be ignorant and even potentially prompted to disobedient revolt by too harsh a mistreatment, they are essentially helpless, defenceless, and childlike beasts of burden, in need of protection, guidance, and compassion.<sup>32</sup> The bourgeoisie should, therefore, intercede on their behalf,<sup>33</sup> yet be wary of interfering in the affairs of their lords.<sup>34</sup> For, Christine asserts: ‘le menu peuple n’a mie communement grant prudence en parole ne meismement en fais qui touchent policie, dont ne se doivent mesler des ordonnances d’icelle establies par les princes’ [the common people in general have no prudence in either speech or deeds having to do with politics, thus they should not get involved in the ordinances established by the princes].<sup>35</sup> She then abruptly turns to a discussion of ‘le commun’ (which was separate from the bourgeoisie) and their machinations against their prince. That is, artisans and craftsmen (‘gens de mestier’) and labourers were especially prone to yield to the questionable attractions of the tavern, a important site of miscreant behaviour. Christine writes of their morals:

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(p. 26) and IX, p. 76. See also Batany on the conflation of richer and poorer classes into one political category in Deschamps’s works (‘Estats’, p. 6).

<sup>30</sup> *Corps de policie*, III. 2, p. 93. On ‘menu’ as an inclusive term for the third estate, see Dudash, ‘Christine de Pizan’, p. 792, n. 14.

<sup>31</sup> See Cowell, *At Play*, p. 30

<sup>32</sup> *Corps de policie*, III. 1, p. 92. See also Dudash, ‘Christine de Pizan’, p. 801.

<sup>33</sup> *Corps de policie*, III. 6, p. 100; Kate Langdon Forhan, ‘Policracy, Obligation, and Revolt: The Body Politic in John of Salisbury and Christine de Pizan’, in *Politics, Gender, and Genre: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Margaret Brabant (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), pp. 33–52 (p. 44); and Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, “‘Enemies Within/Enemies Without’: Threats to the Body Politic in Christine de Pizan’, *Medievalia et Humanistica*, n.s. 26 (1999), 1–15 (p. 6).

<sup>34</sup> *Corps de policie*, III. 6, pp. 100–01. Note Christine’s emphasis on the urban nature of this group.

<sup>35</sup> *Corps de policie*, III. 6, p. 100.

Dieu voudroit bien que leur vie feust communement plus sobre et non si delicative comme il ne leur appertengne, car la lecherie des tavernes et des friandises dont ilz usent a Paris les peut conduire a mains mauz et inconveniens.<sup>36</sup>

[God would wish their lives to be more sober and less indulgent as would be more befitting, for the licentiousness of the taverns and lust for delicacies of which they partake in Paris can lead them to numerous evils and adverse consequences.]

Interestingly, the following pages, devoted to the *bourgeois*, deal with their own speech and roles as humble intermediary or silent subject.

As social structures changed, so, too, did the duties of each segment of society. Across the Channel, tavern owners were heaped with social and legal responsibilities. Within the ambiguous space of the tavern, the proprietor—regardless of his birthright or social standing—was left to keep the peace and to see that his patrons were informed of and abided by the laws.<sup>37</sup> These included but were not limited to curfew, right to carry arms, and length of sojourn.<sup>38</sup> If a visitor infringed upon the law, it was his host who would be held accountable.<sup>39</sup> Although the French situation has yet to be fully charted, Christine's stricture against placing authority in the hands of those not carefully selected and appointed by a noble class, if not actually born to the task like the previous generations of aristocratic administrators, is striking. While food venders and tavern keepers may have been essential elements of the polity—some of the famed windows of Chartres cathedral

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<sup>36</sup> *Corps de police*, III. 9, pp. 106–07.

<sup>37</sup> See Hanawalt and Wallace, 'Introduction', in *Medieval Crime*, ed. by Hanawalt and Wallace, p. xv (see n. 1 above). In late medieval England, moreover, the taverner was most often the one called into court, rather than his patrons; it was up to the host, then, to screen potential clientele, and the reputation of a tavern, alehouse, or inn, reflected that of those who were allowed within its walls. Vagabonds, prostitutes, and illegal games set suspect establishments apart from more reputable institutions. See, for example, McIntosh, 'Finding Language', p. 99 (see n. 18 above). On Christine's treatment of prostitutes and the relationship between prostitution and the tavern, see Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', pp. 811–15 and Hanawalt, 'The Host', pp. 208–10, for the situation in late medieval England. On the conflation of a domestic home and brothel, a designation that took place once a sexual crime had occurred within its walls, see Gauvard, '*De grace especial*', I, p. 286. It would not be unreasonable to suggest, then, given the frequent association between home, hostel, and tavern, that rapes and other sexual transgressions that may have taken place within medieval French taverns would have tarnished the reputation of these establishments along with those of the victims. The institution was also a site where rape plots may have been hatched. See Gauvard, '*De grace especial*', I, p. 291 and II, p. 725.

<sup>38</sup> Hanawalt, 'The Host', p. 216.

<sup>39</sup> On the relationship between the innkeeper's reputation and the outcome of criminal charges, see Akehurst, 'Name, Reputation and Notoriety', in *Fama*, ed. by Fenster and Smail, p. 81 (see n. 7 above).

were financed by and even depict the professions themselves, for example<sup>40</sup>—in the matter of good government, there is little room in Christine's policies for government of the many.

In her *Livre de la mutacion de Fortune* (1402–03) an allegorical dream, denoting Fortune's role in universal history and Christine's own, personal affairs, the author is even more explicit. Within the murky atmosphere of the tavern, its patrons rule themselves:

Plusieurs y a oyseux, sanz maistre,  
Et sanz aucun mestier et estre;  
Veulent aaise, dont qu'il viengne,  
Dont je suppose qu'il couviengne,  
Maintes choses mal a point faire,  
Pour soustenir si fait affaire.  
Ainsi verriés ces menus gens,  
D'aler boire tres diligens.<sup>41</sup>

[Many are there, idle, without master, vocation or home; they desire an easy life, so in order to support this state of affairs, I suppose, many things must be done poorly or not all. And so, you will see these common people go out drinking very diligently.]

Christine's observations in this regard are borne out by the historical record: as the historians Bronisław Geremek and Michel Mollat have shown, the crises of the fourteenth century had an important consequence for skilled labourers: wages increased steeply, particularly among craftsmen, allowing them a certain freedom.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Desportes, 'Food Trades', in *Food*, pp. 275–86 (p. 275). Refer also to Jane W. Williams: 'The New Image of Peasants in Thirteenth-Century French Stained Glass', in *Agriculture in the Middle Ages: Technology, Practice and Representation*, ed. by Del Sweeney (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1995), pp. 277–308 and *Bread, Wine, and Money: The Windows of the Trades at Chartres Cathedral* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993). For an image of a fourteenth-century vintner–taverner, see the reproductions of 'La Regale du Monde', an as yet unpublished poem of the kind devoted to the estates of society, discussed by Jonathan J. G. Alexander, in "'The Butcher, the Baker, the Candlestick Maker': Images of Urban Labor, Manufacture, and Shopkeeping from the Middle Ages", in *Material Culture and Cultural Materialisms in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. by Curtis Perry (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), pp. 89–110 (pp. 97 and 105).

<sup>41</sup> *Mutacion de Fortune*, Part III, lines 6467–74, II, p. 75. Note that 'estre' also signifies 'estate' in Christine's corpus, thereby doubly underscoring the ambiguity of the tavern patrons' social and economic standing; see 'estre' in *Dictionnaire du moyen français: La Renaissance*, ed. by Algirdas Julien Greimas and Teresa Mary Keane (Paris: Larousse, 1992), p. 268, and in Joël Blanchard and Michel Quéreuil, *Lexique de Christine de Pizan: Matériaux pour le Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (DMF)–5* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1999).

<sup>42</sup> Bronisław Geremek, *Poverty: A History*, trans. by Agnieszka Kolakowska (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994), Chapter 2.1; Michel Mollat, *The Poor in the Middle Ages: An Essay in Social History*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), Chapters 10 and 11, for example, at p. 245. See also Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', p. 794.

Ordinances issued repeatedly to combat tradesmen's and artisans' demands, forcing them to return to their pre-Plague professions at their previous rates of pay, though severe, seem to have had little effect in the short-run. In the long-term, however, these restrictions may have had a profound impact on society's stability when coupled with increased taxes and duties—rebellion, as we shall see.<sup>43</sup>

In the *Mutacion de Fortune*, the frequenting of taverns is used as *the* defining characteristic of the urban 'menu peuple' who scorn their rightful place in society and lawful contributions to its successful maintenance: they drink away their day's earnings, beat each other up, and give themselves over to gluttony. Note that workers in the professions—artisans and tradesmen, for example—are characterized as particularly heavy drinkers:

Gens de mestiers, de tous ouvrages,  
Y vi de boire faire oultrages ;  
Par ces tavernes, chacun jour,  
Vous en trouveriés a sejour  
Buvans la toute la journee  
Ou, si tost qu'ont fait leur journee,  
Maint y a couvient aler boire ;  
La despendent, c'est chose voire,  
Plus que toute jour n'ont gaignié, ...<sup>44</sup>

[Artisans of all trades do I see drinking to excess in these taverns, where each day you will see them on holiday, drinking the whole day away or, as soon as they've finished their work, there are many who must go drinking there; it is something to see—there, they spend more than they have earned in an entire day, ... ]

These are facts to which Christine herself bears eyewitness testimony.<sup>45</sup> What is more, as in her other works, Christine bolsters her argument with the authoritative

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<sup>43</sup> Geremek, *Poverty*, Chapter 2.1, Mollat, *The Poor*, pp. 197–203, and Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', pp. 809, n. 85 and 822, n. 126.

<sup>44</sup> *Mutacion de Fortune*, Part III, lines 6433–41, II, p. 74. Moreover, whatever they may have managed to save during the week would only be consumed on Sunday, she continues; note the author's critique of the Sunday revellers' spiritual values, bringing to mind the tavern-church dichotomy, in which the drinking establishment served as the devil's church. On this topic, see, Cowell, *At Play*, pp. 1–53.

<sup>45</sup> Christine repeatedly makes use of the verb 'to see' and the first person throughout the sections devoted to villagers and diverse (towns)people, for example: 'vi' and 'c'est chose voire', as above, and later, 'Vy assez', Part XV, lines 6434, 6506, and 6513, pp. 75–77. She makes exception for those honest workers who earn their wages licitly in the jobs that they have customarily held: 'De gaigner en leur mestier, / En faisant quanqu'il est mestier'; the author similarly testifies to having seen many of them personally ('Je y en vi maint'), perhaps in order the better to contrast their work with the new (drinking) positions occupied by their lazy, tavern-frequenting counterparts (*Mutacion de Fortune*, Part III, lines 6515–16 and 6518, II, p. 77). Christine similarly attests to the relatively peaceful and sober nature of country

force of outside, documentary evidence. In this case, she notes, the tavern goers' countless, drunken brawls have been recorded for posterity in the legal registers:

Le prevost en a plusieurs livres  
D'amende, tout au lonc de l'an.  
Assez de tieulx en treuve l'en !<sup>46</sup>

[The provost fills several books of reparations full of these things, all year long. One finds enough of such things registered in one book alone!]

After establishing the verity of her testament, Christine describes how the men denature themselves into beasts with lowered heads.<sup>47</sup> The women likewise defame themselves by association with the institution. And the gluttony that both seem to seek out is a devil which can never be satiated.<sup>48</sup> The Church Fathers, Saints Augustine and Basil, lend weight to her testimony.<sup>49</sup> That gluttony was one of the

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dwellers, plying their agricultural trades: 'Aussi vis la gent de villages [...] Les gaignages cultivans', etc., *Mutacion de Fortune*, Part III, lines 6519–21, II, p. 77.

<sup>46</sup> *Mutacion de Fortune*, Part III, lines 6448–50, II, pp. 74–75.

<sup>47</sup> *Mutacion de Fortune*, Part III, lines 6499–6504, II, p. 76:

Si est honte a homme et dommage,  
Quant Dieu le forma a s'image,  
Pour vertueux entendement  
Avoir, et a tel dampnement  
Se met qu'il vit comme une beste,  
Qui a tous ses vuloirs est preste.

[It is a great shame and dishonour to man, when God formed him in His image so that he might display virtuous reason, and so damning if he positions himself to live like a beast, that is subject to all of its desires.] Citing Basil the Great, she affirms, in lines 6494–98, II, p. 76:

Quant grant gloutonnie en nous entre,  
Sommes ressemblables aux bestes  
Et aux belues, qui les testes  
Vont enclines adés vers terre,  
Pour a remplir le ventre querre.

[When great gluttony enters us, we are like the beasts and wild animals whose heads are constantly trained toward the earth, in order to fill their bellies.]

<sup>48</sup> 'Gloutonnie semble a Deable, / Qui ja ne peut estre assouvi', *Mutacion de Fortune*, Part III, lines 6480–81, II, p. 76; compare the treatment of the tavern in *Le Ménagier de Paris*: 'le moustier au deable ou ses desciples vont pour le servir' quoted in Dufournet, 'Variations', p. 161.

<sup>49</sup> See *Mutacion de Fortune*, Part III, lines 6486–98, II, p. 76.

seven deadly sins should not be overlooked, as Christine highlights the danger posed to one's physical and spiritual health.

Across the Channel, Christine's literary contemporaries were similarly linking drunkenness with gluttony, along with several of the other seven deadly sins. According to Bennett, however, the ties that bound were relatively gender-specific—to women; she cites William Langland as a striking example. His work condemned the wife of Covetousness for cheating in two female-dominated trades: cloth-making and brewing; he similarly recounted how how Betoun the Brewster waylaid Gluttony on his way to church to be shriven, encouraging over-consumption and other offences. Langland was not alone.<sup>50</sup> Other English authors, as well as Langland, the critic Hanna would argue, were more like Christine, in that they took the institution itself to task as a site friendly to malevolent speech acts, which incited violence and defamation of women.<sup>51</sup> When women frequented taverns, they risked their worldly reputations (and hence temporal futures) along with their immortal souls. It is reasonable to believe that as an author who was devoted to the amelioration of society's views of women, Christine would have been sorely vexed by their association with the institution and the way in which it could stain the reputation of all women in general.

Was Christine rewriting contemporary history yet again? For in this section of the *Mutacion de Fortune*, she clearly indicates that men are the primary culprits and only mentions women parenthetically, even questioning the verity of the reports—significantly, as something that she's heard in passing but not actually witnessed herself:

C'est pitié, quant homme s'accroche  
A villains fais, aussi de femme  
Enten je, s'elle se diffame ;<sup>52</sup>

[It is a pity when man revels in villainous deeds, and woman, as well, so I hear, if she dishonours herself so.]

Given the frequent literary and cultural exchanges between late medieval France and England and blurred lines between literary and legal documents,<sup>53</sup> one could suggest

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<sup>49</sup> This essay forms part of a larger study which investigates the myriad incarnations of the tavern in late medieval France.

<sup>50</sup> See Bennett, 'Misogyny', esp. pp. 169–73 and 175–76 (see n. 21 above); compare Hanna's objections to Bennett's analysis of Langland in 'Brewing Trouble', pp. 6–7 and 'Pilate's Voice', pp. 798–99 (see n. 4 above).

<sup>51</sup> Hanna, 'Brewing Trouble', pp. 6–7 also shows that some English texts impugn the drunkard rather than the institution.

<sup>52</sup> *Mutacion de Fortune*, Part III, lines 6508–10, II, p. 76.

<sup>53</sup> Eustache Deschamps's famed ballad to Geoffrey Chaucer comes to mind, as does Christine's literary renown at the English court, among others. One should also recall that



that Christine may have been responding to contemporary cultural or literary representations of evil, conniving tavern women. Gluttony itself, according to Christine, is the real culprit:

Je croy que plus de bien acquissent  
Que peuple qui au jour d'ui soit,  
Mais gloutonnie les deçoit.<sup>54</sup>

[I believe that people would attain more good today, but gluttony misleads them.]

Christine's reference to Basil similarly inculcates the vice, rather than the gender of the transgressor:

En tant que nous sommes engrant  
De servir la gorge et le ventre,  
Quant grant gloutonnie en nous entre,  
Sommes ressemblables aux bestes<sup>55</sup>

[And in so far as we desire to quench our thirst and serve our stomachs, when great gluttony enters us, we resemble beasts]

In spite of her conclusions—that diligent and wise tradesmen exist—the overwhelming majority of her discourse condemns urban vagrancy, sloth, and the gluttony associated with taverns as an institution. Gauvard's research lends support to Christine's assertions; the greatest proportion of crimes (45%) were committed in medieval French cities and towns, broadly construed.<sup>56</sup>

In the *Mutacion de Fortune*, villagers, by contrast, are less blameworthy, almost honourable by comparison, their faults being related mostly to cheating. They may start work late, quit early, or steal from their neighbours' fields.<sup>57</sup> As in her *Livre des trois vertus* of 1405, the labouring class is represented as being rather averse to actual work: certain individuals may always be on the move and others, particularly

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literature and the law, having been written and studied by the same group of men, were subject to strong reciprocal influences in the period, such that real acts and established narratives were often entwined. See Hanawalt and Wallace, 'Introduction', in *Medieval Crime*, ed. by Hanawalt and Wallace, pp. x–xi, and in the same volume, Claude Gauvard, 'Fear of Crime in Late Medieval France', pp. 1–48, at pp. 4–5 and pp. 7–11, where Gauvard discusses how crimes were told through a 'narrative filter' and how narratives included obligatory, stock descriptions of the events or characters.

<sup>54</sup> *Mutacion de Fortune*, Part III, lines 6430–32, II, p. 74.

<sup>55</sup> *Mutacion de Fortune*, Part III, lines 6492–95, II, p. 76.

<sup>56</sup> See 'De grace especial', tables and discussion, I, pp. 265–68 and II, pp. 680–81. As the home of taverns, cities were the unfortunate recipients of some crimes instigated by country dwellers in town temporarily to take advantage of the taverns, local fairs, or both.

<sup>57</sup> *Mutacion de Fortune*, Part III, lines 6547–59, II, p. 78.

the old or very young, are weak and lazy, or frivolous, respectively.<sup>58</sup> The historical evidence suggests that due to the increased scarcity of labour in the post-Plague period and the ensuing increase in wages, many labourers (including agricultural workers) were encouraged to move from one day job to the next, and from the rural environment to the cities; for a brief period at least, the economy worked to their benefit, as Michel Mollat has shown.<sup>59</sup> This trend, however, was not limited to unskilled manual labour, or to agrarian communities, but included itinerant Parisian artisans, as well.<sup>60</sup>

In her *Corps de police*, *Trois vertus*, and *Mutacion de Fortune* Christine lays the groundwork for her later commentary on the topic of taverns and social unrest. In her allegorical dream vision, *Le Livre de l'advison Cristine* (1405–06), the author's fears about the consequences of unchecked, self-government are realized, warranting harsh discourse. Here, the unprincipled and unschooled revolt that she depicts, even when contained within the walls of the tavern (that is, on a relatively minor scale) may hold ominous overtones for society at large.

Once obedient and loyal,<sup>61</sup> the masses, commonly represented as gentle and tranquil (albeit ignorant) beasts in her more overt mirror texts, have been transformed into a vile and violent squirming mass of earthworms in revolt against abuse. Of particular significance in this regard is the fact that their sedition is engendered 'pour le marcheis des chevaulz', or noble knights.<sup>62</sup> Christine expresses dismay at the realization of rebellion, brought about by princely discord in the *Advison Cristine*.<sup>63</sup> What is more, this disregard from above is compounded by a crumbling socio-economic foundation below. The historical record lends support to the complaints of Christine and her contemporaries against idleness and tavern frequenting, for, ignorant and meddlesome in affairs that do not pertain to them, the people, we learn, now unpredictable and wild, kill each other in taverns.<sup>64</sup> The record pinpoints such establishments as the meeting place of choice—not only for idle commoners, but also for vagabonds, refugees from the rural communities, former

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<sup>58</sup> *Trois vertus*, II. 10, p. 154.

<sup>59</sup> See Mollat, *The Poor*, pp. 197–203 (see n. 42 above) and Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', p. 809, n. 85 (see n. 18 above).

<sup>60</sup> Mollat, *The Poor*, p. 249 and Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', p. 809, n. 85.

<sup>61</sup> *Advison*, I. 4, p. 15.

<sup>62</sup> *Advison*, I. 10, p. 21 and Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', pp. 821–22, esp. n. 125. Interestingly, the Ciompi, rebelling against the strict statutes and wage rates set by the wool guild in Siena, formed the Company of the Caterpillar (*Compagnia del Bruco*) in 1371 (Mollat, *The Poor*, p. 209). Their rebellion of 1378 was not inspired by the traditional poor, but instigated by the aristocratic demagogue, Salvestro de' Medici, for purely political reasons (Mollat, *The Poor*, pp. 211 and 230).

<sup>63</sup> *Advison*, I. 10, p. 21 and Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', p. 816.

<sup>64</sup> *Advison*, II. 17, p. 81 and Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', pp. 821–22.

prisoners (who were seemingly released but never actually left?), social outcasts of every ilk, and even the bourgeoisie, who were at the forefront of plot-hatching and popular uprisings.<sup>65</sup> This representation of the 'menu peuple' as intruding and unschooled represents a significant facet of Christine's portrayal of the people, to be realized fully in her *Livre de paix*, as we shall see. Also developmental in form is Christine's portrayal of those who are ultimately at fault for these uprisings. According to Michel Mollat, these revolts were hardly the work of the poor themselves, but of middling men trying to increase their power;<sup>66</sup> Christine might have agreed.

Although Christine is severe in her characterization of the insurrectionists, to whom she refers as the 'verminier venimeux et abhominable' [venimous and abominable vermin],<sup>67</sup> the blame for rebellion, such as the Jacquerie, does not appear to lie with the common people any more than it does for other uprisings, such as the Tuchin or Maillotin revolts, having been inspired by over-taxation or other issues stemming from the ruling classes.<sup>68</sup> The revolt of early 1358, for example, was spearheaded by Etienne Marcel, provost of Parisian merchants, who exhorted local artisan involvement; the districts involved were the wealthiest in the city; and the participants included self-serving, lesser *bourgeois* and renegade soldiers.<sup>69</sup> Similarly, the Maillotins' insurrection of 1382 was prompted by the 'cry du camelion', or the protests, once again, of a merchant, in response to the imposition of new taxes; retribution was harsh, with a considerable impact upon the merchant class.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> See Mollat, *The Poor*, pp. 226, 229, and 246 and Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', p. 821. In the legal documents of the period, crime and rebellion shared the same vocabulary and were scarcely distinct from one another; see Claude Gauvard, 'Les révoltes du règne de Charles VI: Tentative pour expliquer un échec', in *Révolte et société: Actes du IV<sup>e</sup> colloque d'histoire au présent*, I (1988), pp. 53–61 (pp. 53–55) and Gauvard, 'Fear of Crime', pp. 18–19. Gauvard's description of those excluded from the social main stream and hence responsible for widespread fear, including the unemployed, vagabonds, strangers, former criminals, brothel clients, and gluttons, bear a striking resemblance to Christine's tavern frequenters.

<sup>66</sup> See Mollat, *The Poor*, pp. 159 and 188 and Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', p. 822.

<sup>67</sup> *Advison*, I, 10, p. 21.

<sup>68</sup> Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', p. 822.

<sup>69</sup> Mollat, *The Poor*, pp. 204–05 and 229 and Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', p. 822. See also Gauvard, 'De grace especial', I, pp. 421–23 and II, pp. 557–58, who qualifies the revolt as having been inspired by anti-noble sentiment and the participants as members of the wealthier classes. Interestingly, it was also the poorer members who seem to have suffered the worst losses, having, perhaps, been unable to purchase remission.

<sup>70</sup> *Advison* I, 13, p. 24 and Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', p. 822. See *Lavision-Christine: Introduction and Text*, ed. by Sister Mary Louise Townner (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1932), introd., pp. 28–30 and Mollat, *The Poor*, pp. 223, 225–26, and 216. It is worth noting that this tax was imposed to pay a ransom, but the factor

In the *Livre de paix* (1412–13), at once a call to peace, mirror for princes, and eyewitness account of contemporary crises and legal policies, Christine's view of the people, especially in an urban milieu, is again quite negative. But here the emphasis is less on the moral failings of the frequenters of taverns than on the potential for social unrest that is figured by the tavern and the consequences of such civil conflict for French society at large. In the *Livre de paix*, Christine attempts to offer solutions to the major crises of her time: internal and external war and civil unrest. Urban conflict and its resolution are thus seen in the wider context of universal peace and a just society.<sup>71</sup> Christine simultaneously condemns the institutions and rulers that allow, and even profit from, urban revolts and endorses policies that suppress rebellion, such as the institution of vagrancy policies, articulated in the contemporary *Ordonnances cabochiennes*, aimed at idle patrons of taverns. She thus demonstrates both compassion for, and distrust of, the people.

On the one hand, highlighting their victimization, Christine portrays the simple people as being relatively peaceful and loyal, obedient and reverent toward their king.<sup>72</sup> In an appeal for clemency, Christine characterizes the inhabitants of Paris in particular as good, loyal, and wise subjects.<sup>73</sup> What is more, Christine asserts that the 'commun', the 'populaires', or the 'peuple'—and no longer the impoverished only, as in her earlier works—are the beloved of God, as evinced by his support of Moses and his people during the exodus.<sup>74</sup> Thus, trampling, mistreatment, and over-taxation are displeasing to him, 'car qu'on les doie supporter, Notre Seigneur le veult' [for they must be supported, Our Lord wishes it].<sup>75</sup> Here again, Christine appeals for an end to the retributions and the firm establishment of peace—the author's main goal

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motivating its levy was presented to the populace as a purported theft of the king's silver, as Towner has demonstrated (introd., *Lavision-Cristine*, p. 29). See also the excellent notes to *Advision* I. 10 and 13, pp. 150–55. Compare to *Mutacion de Fortune*, Part III, lines 6196–6200, II, p. 66, in the context of financiers:

Et dire a l'Escripture ouez  
Que 'l'en ne peut bien a .II. maistres  
Servir, ne tenir divers estres'.  
La vi leurs cours plaine de gent,  
Et tout pour pourchacier argent ...

[And you have heard tell of it in the Scriptures: 'one cannot very well serve two masters, nor be indebted to many'. There, I see their courts full of people, all actively pursuing money ...].

<sup>71</sup> On procedural justice in Christine's oeuvre, see, for example, Kate Langdon Forhan, *The Political Theory of Christine de Pizan* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 119–32.

<sup>72</sup> *Paix*, I. 12, p. 80 and III. 6, p. 124 and Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', p. 825.

<sup>73</sup> *Paix*, III. 6, p. 124. See also *Corps de policie*, III, p. 107.

<sup>74</sup> *Paix*, III. 9, pp. 126–27 and Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', p. 826.

<sup>75</sup> *Paix*, III. 8, p. 126 and III. 11, p. 130.

in writing the *Livre de paix*—and not unlike that ephemeral political unity itself, Christine’s composition was interrupted repeatedly by broken treaties and internal riots.<sup>76</sup> Here, however, the victimized masses are no longer as blameless as they were in her earlier *Corps de policie*.

Reminiscent of the *Advision Cristine*, where the people resembled beasts and were by nature devoid of reason, Christine portrays the common masses in the *Paix* as generally inclined to poor judgement. Their ‘simpleness’ in general necessitates governing and guidance by princely rule:

raison est petite communement es menus populaires par ce que grant admenistracion d’enseignement de choses vertueuses et que c’est que bien en difference du mal ne les endoctrinéz en leur temps, parquoy maintes en y a on peut veoir ne estre gaires plus que bestes.<sup>77</sup>

[there is little reason among the common people as regards the great responsibility of teaching virtuous things—which is quite different from the evil that has indoctrinated them in their time—which is why we can see that many of them are hardly more than beasts.]

On the other hand, this (common) lack of reasoning also contributes to the fact that the people are somewhat excusable—‘le prince doit avoir pour recommandé le menu commun, non obstant que de droite condicion et des oncques soit peuple enclin à de legier error par folle creance et mauvais exort’ [the prince must watch over the various common people in his care, notwithstanding the fact that given their true nature, the people have ever been rather inclined to act readily on foolish credulity or bad advice].<sup>78</sup> The ‘menus populaires’ cannot think rationally and may blindly stumble into any undertaking.<sup>79</sup> Therefore, because they lack experience in judicial proceedings, having spent their entire lives at their various labours, and have no real,

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<sup>76</sup> Willard, introd., *Paix*, pp. 23–25 and Dudash, ‘Christine de Pizan’, p. 826.

<sup>77</sup> *Paix*, III, 2, p. 117. See also Gianni Mombello, ‘Quelques aspects de la pensée politique de Christine de Pisan d’après ses oeuvres publiées’, in *Culture et politique en France à l’époque de l’humanisme et de la Renaissance*, ed. by Franco Simone (Turin: Accademia delle scienze, 1967), pp. 43–153 (p. 137) and Dudash, ‘Christine de Pizan’, p. 826 text and n. 143. As Reno has indicated, however, Christine does include one anecdote in which ‘un homme de simple estat’ was given an official post over a favourite, dice-playing servant of Louis d’Anjou, merit being the key factor in the decision; see *Paix*, I, 13, p. 83; Christine M. Reno, ‘Christine de Pizan: “At Best a Contradictory Figure?”’ in *Politics, Gender, and Genre*, ed. by Margaret Brabant, pp. 207–27 (p. 175); see n. 33 above. Compare also *Paix*, II, 14, p. 106. For a view opposing that of Reno, see, in the same collection, Sheila Delany, ‘History, Politics, and Christine Studies: A Polemical Reply’, pp. 193–206 (p. 198).

<sup>78</sup> *Paix*, III, 7, p. 125; Mombello, ‘Quelques aspects’, p. 139; compare to Gauvard, ‘Fear of Crime’, p. 27 (see n. 53 above).

<sup>79</sup> *Paix*, III, 10–11, pp. 128 and 130.

first-hand experience of true ‘honour’ or even good sense, Christine concludes that the people are ‘mute’ in eloquent speech and have no place in government.<sup>80</sup>

By portraying these members of the third estate as meddlesome in the affairs of others, the author is particularly harsh in her denunciations of those who hold meetings, which she views as laughable, given their seeming inability to desist from frequenting taverns. To be more explicit, Christine queries:

Et un tel fol, qui à paines sara sa Pater Nostre, ne soy meismes gouverner fors par ces tavernes, voudra gouverner autrui. Dieu! du gouvernement duquel, pour ce que le sens est petit communement de telz et que naturellement les folz sont orgueilleux, quelque chetifs qu’ilz soient, n’est plus de meschief que leur gouvernement.<sup>81</sup>

[And such a fool, who scarcely knows his *Pater Noster*, and may only be governed by the taverns, desires to rule others. God! And so, because the reasoning of such fools is generally weak and, naturally these fools are arrogant, however feeble they may be, there is no greater misfortune than their government.]

Christine concludes by depicting their stance as even more comic, perhaps in imitation of the dramatists’ art:

Ce semble un droit jeux de personnages fait par mocquerie, et sur ce fondent ilz en leurs contenance et parlers pour ce ilz les ont ouy en ces farces que on fait, cuident que on doie par tel maniere prononcer et asseoir son langage, un pié avant et autre arriere, tenant les mains au costé, il n’est plus d’egalle. O!<sup>82</sup>

[This seems a veritable game of acting, made through mockery, and they base their facial expressions and lines on this game, because they have heard them in the farces that are performed, and they believe that people should pronounce and deliver their speech in this way, with one foot in front and the other behind, holding their hands at their sides; nothing compares to it. Oh!]

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<sup>80</sup> *Paix*, III. 11, p. 131. This trend has similarly been observed by both Maureen Quilligan, *The Allegory of Female Authority: Christine de Pizan’s Cité des dames* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 264–65 and Mombello, ‘Quelques aspects’, p. 141. See Dudash, ‘Christine de Pizan’, p. 826. Refer also the parable attributed to Seneca, cited in *Paix*, III. 30, p. 161: ‘garder nous devons de non envoyer dons là où ilz sont mal employéz, tout ainsi que seroient biaux livres aux ruraulx et mal entendans’ (my emphasis) [we must take care not to send gifts where they will be ill used, in the same way that beautiful books would be among rustics and the ignorant]. Note the implicit reference to Christine’s work itself. Although employed in the context of proper gift giving, this citation reveals a telling attitude towards unschooled villagers.

<sup>81</sup> *Paix*, III. 11, p. 131. Note that the tavern is presented as the antithesis of the Church and the rejection of spiritual worship for temporal pleasures.

<sup>82</sup> *Paix*, III. 11, p. 131.

This is more than a jest, however, and its players far more lethal. The tavern has become a real-world stage upon which the people's discontents are played. Christine continues:

mais quel orreur de ce à veoir au partir de la celle diabolique assemblée de innombrable menue gent suivant l'un l'autre comme brebis, prests et appareilléz de tous maux faire.

[but what a horror it is to see the diabolical assemblage of countless, diverse people, following one another like sheep, ready and geared up to do all kinds of evil.]

In order to squelch the idleness associated with drinking establishments, and hence the seditious opportunity they provide, Christine suggests a course of action similar to that proposed in the *Ordonnance cabochienne* of 1413—a sort of vagrancy policy, as Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski has shown.<sup>83</sup> This policy, moreover, was aimed at the lower orders, that is, the working classes, whose unseemly excesses threatened the very foundations of society, its production, and its peace.<sup>84</sup> It is significant, however, that Christine offers this advice to the prince in Chapter 15 of Part 3, and only after she has addressed the people directly in Chapter 10, where she exhorts the 'commun' to beware of the faults of Moses' followers in the desert.<sup>85</sup> For all their

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<sup>83</sup> 'Enemies Within', pp. 6–7 (see n. 33 above); *Paix*, III, 15, p. 137; and Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', pp. 826–27 (see n. 18 above). On the labour shortage, increased wages, and their relation to the inn, see above. Compare Christine's conclusions to Hanna's findings with respect to medieval England, where tavern shiftlessness opposed holy labour and where, at the same time, taxes on home brew sought to reduce the excess profit earned by those households, thus serving as an equalizing force within the community ('Pilate's Voice', p. 796 and 'Brewing Trouble', pp. 5–6 and p. 8, respectively; see n. 4 above). Class climbing would seem to have been condemned, then, even within one's social stratum. See also the *Ordinance and Statute of Labourers*, passed in post-Plague era England as discussed in McIntosh, 'Finding Language', p. 106 (see n. 18 above). Fear of idleness, wandering, and begging and the ties between sloth and alehouses were common topoi in the legal and lay texts composed on both sides of the Channel. Gauvard posits that political reformers like Christine and her contemporaries, from Guillaume de Machaut and Philippe de Vitry to Jean Gerson and Nicolas de Clamages sought extensive judicial reforms to bring criminals to justice ('Fear of Crime', p. 27). It is important to note that while Christine sought stability, proper stewardship, and peace, she was also a proponent of moderation in punishment, as in all things.

<sup>84</sup> Hanna highlights a similar condemnation of the lower orders in the English record, where aristocratic overindulgence and wastage were, conversely, acceptable manifestations of one's power. See 'Brewing Trouble', p. 9. While the 'menu peuple' and the princess were to avoid bodily excesses like too much sleep or food, in Christine's oeuvre, each class had to be aware of its own particular brand of overindulgence. The aristocracy could easily fall prey to immoderate expense on frippery and dress, for instance, while the common classes, half-hearted work or vagrancy. See Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', p. 806, n. 79 and p. 828.

<sup>85</sup> *Paix*, III, 10, pp. 128–30.

idolatry and ‘murmure’ against their ‘duc’, they were aptly punished, she warns.<sup>86</sup> Yet, as the biblical account goes, Christine indicates that it was during Moses’ lack of stewardship, while he ‘tarda longuement’ [tarried] on Mount Sinai, that the admonitions of ‘trois des plus sedicieux du peuple’ who ‘orent envie sur leur prince Moyse et de ce que il avoit seigneurie sur le peuple’ [three of the most seditious of the people [who] coveted the position of Moses, their prince, and his lordship over the people], engendered the most egregious transgressions. Tantamount among these was the people’s division.<sup>87</sup> In this context, Christine expresses her strongest denunciations of the people.<sup>88</sup>

In attempting to interfere in the affairs of their betters, the masses are transformed from a peace-loving flock into a ‘diabolique assemblée de innombrable menue gent’ as we have seen.<sup>89</sup> Following each other like sheep, the ‘menu peuple’ described in the *Livre de paix* remain relatively harmless until they take inappropriate action, at which point a metamorphosis occurs—they become the wild boar whom Christine describes in this way:

onques fureur ne cruaulté de senglier ne s’y acompara sans savoir qu’ilz se demandent et quant ilz s’encharment sur quelque soit, ou sur aucunes gens, là n’a resne tenue ne honneur gardé à prince n’à princesse, à seigneur ne à maistre, n’à voisin ne voisine.<sup>90</sup>

[the fury or the cruelty of the wild boar will never be compared with them, when they set upon anyone or anything, unrelentingly and indiscriminately, whatever or whoever it may be; there, they are neither held in check nor restrained by honour due to prince or princess, lord or master, neighbour or woman next-door. ]

Like their wealthy, grasping counterparts, they, too, threaten others’ possessions, and hence the established social hierarchy.<sup>91</sup> Referring to the Cabochien revolt of 1413, Christine depicts a certain sector of society as ready to do evil—they are, quite simply, the authors of massacre and theft.<sup>92</sup> Yet, one should note that the

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<sup>86</sup> *Paix*, III. 10, p. 129.

<sup>87</sup> *Paix*, III. 10, p. 129.

<sup>88</sup> Dudash, ‘Christine de Pizan’, p. 827.

<sup>89</sup> *Paix*, III. 11, p. 131.

<sup>90</sup> *Paix*, III. 11, p. 131; Mombello, ‘Quelques aspects’, p. 142 (see n. 77 above).

<sup>91</sup> See Geremek on the general suspicion of the poor as a threat to property and the established order (*Poverty*, p. 32) and Blumenfeld-Kosinski on Christine’s views concerning the maintenance of social hierarchies (‘Enemies Within’, pp. 7–8).

<sup>92</sup> *Paix*, III. 11, p. 131. Also indicated by Margarete Zimmermann, ‘Vox Femina, Vox Politica: *The Lamentacion sur les maux de la France*’, *Politics, Gender, and Genre*, ed. by Margaret Brabant, pp. 113–27 at p. 114 (see n. 33 above). See also Dudash, ‘Christine de Pizan’, pp. 827–28.



composition of this group, whose greed leads them to lust for civil war and gives free license to both murderers and thieves,<sup>93</sup> is not clearly definable.

Initially, the rebellious were composed of wealthy members of the guild of butchers.<sup>94</sup> This segment of the 'menu peuple' clearly forms part of the subcategory of bourgeoisie. It was, in fact, the disengagement of the *bourgeois* which brought the revolt to its end.<sup>95</sup> That the revolt began with the guild of butchers and moved on through the lower strata may exemplify the 'Maignee duite selon seigneur' [like the lord, so the household] effect to which Christine alludes throughout her works—the Cabochiens set the example for the lower members of this sector of society.<sup>96</sup> Claude Gauvard's findings support this interpretation. According to political theorists of the period, she writes, a double principle was in effect: on the one hand, crime was contagious; on the other, the king should serve as example.<sup>97</sup> Nor should we overlook the fact that the vast majority of crimes recorded in late-medieval France were homicides at 57%—and that the social origin of the largest identifiable group of criminals was noble.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> *Paix*, III, 12, p. 133. See also Mombello, 'Quelques aspects', p. 142.

<sup>94</sup> Alfred Coville, *Les Cabochiens et l'Ordonnance de 1413* (Paris, 1888), p. 45 and Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', pp. 827–28; see also Quilligan, *Allegory*, p. 266; and Willard, in her introduction to *Paix*, pp. 24–25.

<sup>95</sup> Reno, 'Figure', p. 173 (see n. 77 above). Mombello signals, in this regard, Christine's tendency to condemn meddling *bourgeois*, who interfere in the affairs of princes ('Quelques aspects', p. 71). This train of thought was also apparent in the *Corps de police*, III, 5–7, pp. 99–102; see Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', pp. 827–28.

<sup>96</sup> *Advision*, I, 21, p. 38 and *Paix*, I, 12, p. 80. For more on the Cabochien uprising see, for example, Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', p. 828 and Reno, 'Figure', pp. 172–73; see also Mombello, 'Quelques aspects', pp. 132–33, for the historical context.

<sup>97</sup> Gauvard, 'Fear of Crime', pp. 24–25 (see n. 53 above).

<sup>98</sup> Gauvard, '*De grace especial*', tables and discussion beginning I, pp. 30 and 242. Homicide is followed by theft at 16%, the only other notable figure; other criminals listed by social group were unidentified (24.5%), officers (15%), and clerics (10%). Labourers and the community combined account for only 8.5% of reported criminals, while the groups labeled as 'unidentified' and 'other' (9.5%) total 34%. Identifying criminals' social standing was a slippery problem at best, although Gauvard posits that the archival data in the *Registre criminel du Châtelet de Paris* from 1389–1392 suggests that professionals dominated the criminal scene; see '*De grace especial*', I, p. 276. While the cause of most crimes has gone unrecorded (roughly 34%), leaving aside the Devil and a variety of other factors (17.5% combined), drink (nearly 10%) plus gaming (5%), anger (16.5%) and the ubiquitous 'sin' (8%) together account for a considerable percentage of reported crimes in late-medieval France. See Gauvard, '*De grace especial*', I, pp. 430 and 451, on the association of taverns, gaming, and drink.

Still, like the wild boar, the poorer members of the third estate may be regarded as ‘muable’, unpredictable or unsteady, and unstoppable once provoked.<sup>99</sup> This provocation could be the very over-taxation and extravagance denounced by Christine in her earlier works, for ‘tel gent sont povres et indigens et ne peuvent avoir riens se de jour en jour à leurs labours ne le gaingnent’, thus they ‘voudroient tousjours guerre, par especial civile, afin de courir sus aux riches pour ce que ilz se voient en plus grant quantité que eulx’ [these people are poor and indigent and can have nothing except what they earn from their labours each day [...] they always desire war, especially civil conflict, in order to attack the rich since they see themselves outnumbering the rich].<sup>100</sup> The cupidity denounced among the members of the upper classes in Christine’s previous works, as well as that alluded on the part of labourers in her earlier mirror for princesses, her *Livre des trois vertus*, converge in the *Livre de paix* where ‘ceulx qui sont povres es citéz, c’est assavoir le peuple, ont tousjours envie sur les riches’ [those who are poor in the cities, that is to say, the people, always covet the possessions of the rich].<sup>101</sup> Although the primary sin of the wealthy was the abuse of power, closely associated with greed, for the impoverished, it was a refusal of the privations dictated by their social station<sup>102</sup>—with murderous results. This rejection could have serious consequences for city dwellers overall. For, commoners and butchers have become ‘le diabolique menu gent’ [the diabolical common people] who massacre innocent women and children.<sup>103</sup>

Although Christine is careful to observe that she does not wish to lay the blame on any sector of society, particularly that of the nobility, she nonetheless affirms that her motives have always been to achieve peace and all good and avoid war and to demonstrate how to govern such people through good sense, so that these dangers can never be repeated.<sup>104</sup> Christine clearly indicates that it is through princely folly that the people have been able to arm themselves.<sup>105</sup> In addition, she enumerates a

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<sup>99</sup> *Paix*, III. 11–12, pp. 131–33; Mombello, ‘Quelques aspects’, pp. 139–40.

<sup>100</sup> *Paix*, III. 12, p. 133; Oexle, ‘Pauvres’, p. 217; and Dudash, ‘Christine de Pizan’, p. 828.

<sup>101</sup> *Paix*, III. 12, p. 132. Also signaled by Oexle, ‘Pauvres’, pp. 216–17. Note that Christine pinpoints the urban poor specifically in this context. For more on Christine’s views of the urban and rural poor, particularly with regard to the *Livre de la mutacion de Fortune*, see Blumenfeld-Kosinski, ‘Enemies Within’, pp. 6–7.

<sup>102</sup> Geremek, *Poverty*, p. 29, Mollat, *The Poor*, p. 231 (see n. 42 above), and Dudash, ‘Christine de Pizan’, p. 828.

<sup>103</sup> *Paix*, III. 14, p. 136.

<sup>104</sup> *Paix*, III. 12, p. 132: ‘comme tous mes motifs soient [...] afin de tirer à paix et tout bien et eschever guerre [...] pour demonstrier comment *par grant sens* tel gent tenir et gouverner afin que jamais les perilz susdiz ne pareulx ne puissent avenir’ (my emphasis); Dudash, ‘Christine de Pizan’, pp. 828–29 and n. 159.

<sup>105</sup> *Paix*, III. 12, p. 133. Yet, some, spurning rumour, she notes, have refused to take part in these troubling events at all. Again, Christine reinforces her argument with eyewitness

wide range of factors contributing to the abuses of power which leave the people with little or no alternative; in the *Livre de paix* these include injustice coupled with power, overburdening of the people, blinding arrogance, and civil war which destroys the very flesh of the people.<sup>106</sup> Cumulatively, these factors can result in consequences for the nobility as ominous as those indicated for the people at large. Christine thus charges: 'par plusieurs griefs et extorcion faire sur le peuple et y asseoir males toltes' [by imposing much harm and extortion on the people and taxing them unjustly], the people may revel or their good will should be lost].<sup>107</sup> In fact, each time that the rebellious nature of the 'menu peuple' is invoked in the *Livre de paix*, it is, without exception, preceded by some example of injustice or misrule on the part of princes that could have or already has, inspired it.<sup>108</sup> Therefore, although horrified by the uprising of the (common) masses, the author indicts their rulers for bringing about such violence. It is in admonishing and calling attention to each division of society that Christine, as intercessor, hopes to achieve a much sought-after peace; anyone disturbing it is thus blameworthy.

In the *Livre de paix* Christine uses the tavern and its potential for rebellion as a focal point for laying out one of her strategies for achieving peace: to prevent internal strife from above (by having rulers treat their subjects justly) and from below (by keeping the people from upsetting the existing class structure). If I were to attempt to set Christine's thoughts about the people and the tavern into verse as a devise, I might write: 'To each his labour, to each his estate, and to you each, tarry not within the tavern'.

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testimony, by asserting that she has known such people personally. *Paix*, III. 12, p. 132: 'n'est mie doute que meismes des simples gens de mestier est il de tres bons et qui nullement à telz rumeurs ne se vouldroient ingerer, et en congnois plusieurs qui tres dolens estoient de ces espoiz, si soit pris des oyans ou bon entendement que je le dis et non autrement' (my emphasis) [there is no doubt that even among the simple tradesmen there are good people who would not get involved in such conflicts at all and I know many of them who were very upset by these matters; and it should be understood as I have stated it and not otherwise.] I am grateful to Christine Reno, Liliane Dulac, and Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski for their help with this translation.

<sup>106</sup> *Paix*, III. 4, p. 119, III. 8, p. 126, III. 20, p. 145, and III. 14, p. 135, respectively.

<sup>107</sup> *Paix*, III. 5, p. 122. I am indebted to Liliane Dulac and Christine Reno for their kind assistance with this passage.

<sup>108</sup> See Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan', p. 829 and n. 162.



## Latin Learning in Christine de Pizan's *Livre de paix*

CONSTANT J. MEWS

The *Livre de paix* provides a particularly valuable means of assessing a much debated question, the extent of Christine's Latin learning.<sup>1</sup> It is unusual among her writings in that she begins each chapter with one or more Latin

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<sup>1</sup> The '*Livre de la paix*' of Christine de Pisan. A Critical Edition with Introduction and Notes, ed. by Charity Cannon Willard ('s-Gravenhague: Mouton, 1958). Following Christine's usage (pp. 57, 58), I refer to her work as the *Livre de paix*. Joël Blanchard, in 'Christine de Pizan: tradition, expérience et traduction', *Romania*, 111 (1990), 200–35, esp. 206, n. 14, reaffirms the view of P. G. C. Campbell, *L'Épître d'Othéa. Étude sur les sources de Christine de Pizan* (Paris: Champion, 1924), p. 132n. 1, that Christine was unable to read Latin fluently, despite the fact that Suzanne Solente had demonstrated her command of Latin sources, not otherwise known to have been translated, including St Thomas's commentary on the *Metaphysics*, in *Le Livre des faits et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*, 2 vols (Paris: Champion, 1936–40), I, pp. xxxv–vi. Liliane Dulac and Christine Reno confirmed that she had read St Thomas in the original Latin, in 'L'humanisme vers 1400. Essai d'exploration à partir d'un cas marginal: Christine de Pizan, lectrice de Thomas d'Aquin', in *Pratiques de la culture écrite en France au XVe siècle. Actes du colloque du CNRS, Paris, 18–21 mai 1992 organisé en l'honneur de Gilbert Ouy par l'Unité de recherche 'Culture écrite du Moyen Age tardif'*, ed. by Monique Ornato and Nicole Pons, Textes et études du Moyen Age, 2 (Louvain-la-Neuve: FIDEM, 1995), pp. 161–78. In his introduction to Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre des faits et bonnes moeurs du roi Charles V le sage* (Paris: Stock, 1997), p. 22, Eric Hicks is cautious about pronouncing on Christine's knowledge of Latin, although does not reject the possibility that she had translated passages from St Thomas's commentary on the *Metaphysics*. Gabriella Parussa argues that while she generally preferred to use French translations rather than Latin texts, she was able to give an accurate French translation of short Latin texts of Fathers of the Church, in the introduction of her edition of *Epistre Othea* (Geneva: Droz, 1999), p. 52 n. 89. I am indebted to Alan Croke, Karen Green, Jeff Richards, Janice Pinder, and James Laidlaw for their comments on drafts of this paper.

quotations on which she bases her subsequent discussion. As she divides up the *Livre de paix* into three parts, the first comprizing fifteen chapters, the second eighteen chapters, and the third forty-eight chapters, this adds up to around one hundred and forty explicit Latin citations from thirty-five different works (not counting the Bible). Some Latin quotations are also cited as marginalia. So far little attention has been given to these Latin epigraphs which provide the organizing framework of her discussion. Close scrutiny of these citations can help us resolve the question, often debated, of the extent of her Latin learning. The *Livre de paix* is a treatise in which Christine endeavours quite self-consciously to apply her familiarity with the wisdom of both classical and biblical literary traditions to the vexed political question of how a ruler should govern the realm.

The critical edition of the *Livre de paix*, first embarked upon by Charity Cannon Willard before the Second World War and eventually published in 1958, is in many respects a heroic achievement, rescuing from oblivion a text that had never previously attracted significant attention. There are deficiencies, however, in its presentation of the Latin quotations introduced by Christine, both as chapter headings and as marginal annotations. They might lead a reader to assume that Christine had only a very weak knowledge of Latin. If one had to make a judgment of Christine's Latinity based solely on the quality of the Latin in this edition, it would have to be very negative indeed. Little wonder that these epigraphs have attracted scant critical attention.

If we study these Latin quotations in our most important copy of the *Livre de paix* (Brussels, Bibl. Royale, 10,366), it is evident that Christine's knowledge of Latin spelling and syntax is far better than one might assume from looking only at Willard's edition.<sup>3</sup> Willard judged the Brussels manuscript to be 'superior in every

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<sup>2</sup> Reviews of Willard's edition are listed by Angus Kennedy, *Christine de Pizan*, Research Bibliographies and Checklists, 72 (London: Grant and Cutler, 1984), p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> The epigraphs in the Brussels MS incorporate some late medieval conventions in Latin orthography, such as *nulum* and *belum* for *nullum* and *bellum* and *c* for *t* in certain contexts. The only lapse into faulty Latin that I have noticed occurs on fol. 70<sup>va</sup> III. 16, p. 108: 'Sapientis ac boni viri non est *belle* [instead of *bella*] [...] certare'; also she supplies an ungrammatical *praeceptis* for *praecepti* (III. 45, p. 179; see below). Corrections need to be made to Willard's transcriptions at a number of places, such as (italics are mine): I. 5, p. 65, n. 33: 'Si inveterite et *per genus* ducte divicie nobiles faciunt, multo *praestancior* est'; I. 6, p. 67: 'Non *quemquam* magis decet'; I. 10, p. 75: 'Qui *corripit* hominem'; I. 11, p. 77: 'Homo qui blandis fictis *que* sermonibus'; I. 12, p. 79: 'in multiplicacione *impiorum* [...] et ruynas *eorum* justi videbunt'; I. 14, p. 83: '[...] malo et *labia* sua'; II. 2, p. 90: 'Sicut *placidum* mare ex aspero celum *que* ex nubilo'; II. 3, p. 91: 'Quem ad modum *precise* arbores pluribus ramis repullulant et multa satorum [Christine omits: genera ut densiora surgant, reciduntur, ita regia crudelitas auget inimicorum] *numerum* tollendo parentes *enim* liberi que eorum qui interfecti sunt propinqui et amici in locum singulorum [Seneca: singularium] succedunt' (Christine translates the whole passage of Seneca, but seems to have accidentally omitted a phrase in copying it out); II. 7, p. 97: 'absque *ullo* timore'; II. 11, p. 102: 'Nichil est virtute *praestancius*'; II. 14, p. 106: [Cicero]

respect' to the only other copy then known (Paris, BnF fr. 1182), but assumed, following Millard Meiss, that both manuscripts were products of the atelier of the 'master of Christine de Pisan'.<sup>4</sup> Since then, however, it has become apparent that Christine was much more involved in producing good copies of her own writings than had been realized. Following Willard's initial tentative steps towards identifying Christine's handwriting, Gilbert Ouy and Christine Reno have argued that the Brussels copy of the *Livre de paix* is in fact an autograph, in Christine's own hand.<sup>5</sup> The Paris copy was produced later in the fifteenth century, as was another

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'Si homo in celum raptus esset omnia que mirabilia'; [Aristotle] 'Naturaliter homo animal civile est'; [Giles of Rome] 'quod non potest fieri'; III. 1, p. 115: 'ornamentum enim inperatorum' [Seneca: inperiorum]; III. 4, p. 119: 'Seuissima est injusticia'; III. 11, p. 130: 'intumuit torrens accrior fluit'; III. 16, p. 138: 'Sapientis ac boni viri [...] Sed sapientis atque'; III. 22, p. 148: 'Ordinata caritas neminem reputat'; III. 25, p. 152: 'quam domus plena divitiis'; III. 29, p. 159: 'Nota partes utilitatis due incolumitas'; III. 36, p. 172: 'Tunc omina jura [Claudian: iure] tenebis'; III. 37, p. 173: 'Si Bacho Venerique vacas qui cetera subdis sub iuga venisti'; III. 38, p. 178: 'Exigui est animi infirmi que voluptas'; III. 39, p. 176: 'et per te revocetur'; III. 40, p. 177: 'Genus et proavos et que'; III. 41, p. 177: 'O noverca virtutum mollicies et si cuius etati sit adversa adolescencie tamen perniciosissiam hostis est [per... est in mg] que si blandiciis attracta fuerit'; III. 44, p. 179: 'Quod praecipiti via'; III. 45, p. 179: 'Finis praecepti [Christine: praeceptis]'; III. 45, p. 179: 'Judicium sine misericordia fiet'; III. 46, p. 180: 'apices mansuete'.

<sup>4</sup> Willard, *Paix*, pp. 47–48.

<sup>5</sup> Charity Cannon Willard, 'An Autograph Manuscript of Christine de Pisan?', *Studi Francesi*, 27 (1965), 452–57; Gilbert Ouy and Christine Reno, 'Identification des autographes de Christine de Pizan', *Scriptorium*, 34 (1980), 221–38, and 'Les hésitations de Christine: Etudes des variantes de graphies dans trois manuscrits autographes de Christine de Pizan', *Revue des langues romanes*, 92 (1988), 256–93; see also Gilbert Ouy, 'Une énigme codicologique: les signatures des cahiers dans les manuscrits autographes et originaux de Christine de Pizan', in *Calames et cahiers. Mélanges de codicologie et de paléographie offerts à Léon Gilissen*, ed. by Jacques Lemaire and Emile van Balberghe (Brussels: Centre d'Étude des Manuscrits, 1985), pp. 265–86. For a more cautious view, see James C. Laidlaw, 'Christine de Pizan—A Publisher's Progress', *Modern Languages Review*, 82 (1987), 35–75, esp. pp. 42 and 61–62, and 'Christine and the Manuscript Tradition', in *Christine de Pizan: A Casebook*, ed. by Barbara K. Altmann and Deborah L. McGrady (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 231–49, esp. 240–42. His view is countered by Gilbert Ouy and Christine Reno, 'X + X' = 1. Response to James C. Laidlaw', in *Contexts and Continuities: Proceedings of the IVth International Colloquium on Christine de Pizan (Glasgow, 21–27 July 2000)*, Published in Honour of Liliane Dulac, ed. by Angus J. Kennedy and others, Glasgow University Medieval French Texts and Studies, 1 (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 2002), pp. 724–30. Gabriella Parussa observes the variety of spellings employed in manuscripts identified as autographs, 'Orthographes et autographes. Quelques considérations sur l'orthographe de Christine de Pizan', *Romania*, 117 (1999), 143–58, and her comments in relation to the *Epistre Othea*, pp. 91–92.

manuscript, copied for Jean V of Créquy, now in private possession.<sup>6</sup> The accuracy of transcription of the Latin quotations presented in the Brussels manuscript, as indeed of the French text itself, attests to its remarkable reliability in transmitting Christine's text. The Brussels manuscript provides a high quality copy of her original text, annotated by the same hand as wrote the main text.

One of the many interesting features of this Brussels manuscript, which carries a single author portrait of Christine on fol. 3<sup>ra-b</sup>, immediately after the list of chapters of the first part, is that it provides few concessions to visual elegance, unlike the magnificently illustrated copies of the *Epistre Othea*, so well studied by Sandra Hindman.<sup>7</sup> Christine herself writes out the Latin text, generally no more than a few lines, at the opening of each chapter of the *Livre de paix*, always on a new line, but not always with a distinguishing initial. She gives the impression of being able to move easily from Latin to French. The first five chapters of Part I (fols 1–9<sup>rb</sup>) also have frequent marginal annotation in which Christine herself provides the Latin text that she translates and comments on within her chapter. It seems that her initial intention was to provide a richly annotated text, in which she included the Latin sources of her discussion in her margin for any scholarly reader. These annotations tend to peter out after fol. 8<sup>ra</sup> (l. 5), when the size of the margin is reduced. Only a few subsequent marginalia, all in the same hand, are added to the rest of the manuscript.<sup>8</sup> Pressure of time, and perhaps economic factors, may have forced her to abandon this system of scholarly annotation. Nonetheless, their richness in the opening chapters, does suggest that Christine was drawing directly on Latin texts rather than on French translations for the treatise as a whole. There has been much scholarly speculation in relation to other writings of Christine, whether she relied on translations of existing texts or had access direct to scholarly originals. Earl Jeffrey Richards has put a powerful case for arguing that Christine had more direct knowledge of the Latin Fathers than has often been appreciated.<sup>9</sup> The Latin texts

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<sup>6</sup> Charity Cannon Willard, 'An Unknown Manuscript of Christine de Pizan's *Livre de la paix*', *Studi Francesi*, 64 (1978), 90–97.

<sup>7</sup> Sandra L. Hindman, *Christine de Pizan's 'Epistre Othéa'. Painting and Politics at the Court of Charles VI* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1986).

<sup>8</sup> After the frequent Latin marginalia on fols 1–8<sup>rb</sup> and 9<sup>rb</sup>, there are notes on fols 16<sup>ra</sup> (Wisdom 6. 1 added to I. 9, p. 74), 33<sup>ra</sup> (attributed to Juvenal, in fact Lygdamus, and part of the *Carmina* of Tibullus, added to II. 4), 36<sup>rb</sup> (Horace added to II. 8), and 36<sup>va</sup> (Boethius added to II. 8).

<sup>9</sup> Earl Jeffrey Richards, 'In Search of a Feminist Patrology: Christine de Pizan and "les glorieux docteurs" of the Church', *Mystics Quarterly*, 21 (1995), 3–17; also printed in *Une femme de lettres au moyen âge. Etudes autour de Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Liliane Dulac and Bernard Ribémont (Orleans: Paradigme, 1995), pp. 281–95; see also his paper 'Christine de Pizan and Jean Gerson, an Intellectual Friendship', in *Christine de Pizan 2000: Studies on Christine de Pizan in Honour of Angus J. Kennedy*, ed. by John Campbell and Nadia Margolis, *Etudes de langue et littérature françaises*, 196 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), pp. 197–



quoted in the *Livre de paix* confirm what many have suspected, that Christine did have a good knowledge of reading Latin, and was able to transcribe Latin without significant error.

The first three chapters of the *Livre de paix* draw from the text that Christine knew in large part by heart, the Latin Bible. She begins with a confession of God as drawing praise from the least of his creatures: 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, you have made praise' [Psalms 8. 3], perhaps as a way of legitimizing a female voice speaking out on the subject of peace. She speaks of God opening the lips of Daniel, who spoke out on behalf of the unjustly condemned Susannah, and was himself thrown into the lions' den, as violent a place as the present situation of France. I read this as her attempt to liken herself to Daniel, prophesying in a situation of political danger. Only in her second chapter does she praise the new dauphin, who has to carry out the divine will. Her third chapter begins with a saying attributed to Jesus, that in fact combines the wording of Matthew 12. 25 and Luke 11. 17, suggesting that she is quoting the Vulgate from memory rather than a written text: 'every kingdom divided in itself will be in mourning, and every city and house divided against itself will not stand.'<sup>10</sup> Christine's favourite source of scriptural quotation is the Psalter, which she quotes particularly frequently in the first part of the *Livre de paix*. She found words to express her longing for peace in the kingdom of France in the longing for the peace of Jerusalem expressed within the Psalms of David. Whereas conventional monastic literature read the Psalms as about peace in the next world, mediated through the Church, Christine reads the Psalms as having a message that is as much political and ethical as spiritual.

Although Christine opened the work with a veiled allusion to herself as rather like Daniel, an innocent, in the lions' den, it is noticeable that she does not draw otherwise on any of the great prophetic books of the Bible, in which Hebrew prophets thundered warnings against corrupt and worldly rulers. Even though in her *Avision*, she had deliberately appealed to the authority of prophets and sibyls to find authority for herself as a writer, she steers away from explicit quotation from the biblical prophets in the *Livre de paix*, at least in her chapter headings.<sup>11</sup> While she is certainly familiar with the prophetic books in the Bible, and compares the situation of France to that of Israel (as in III. 19–21), she prefers to draw her authoritative quotations from the Wisdom books of the Hebrew Scriptures, above all the Book of Proverbs, which she presents as fully compatible with the values of classical

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<sup>10</sup> I. 3 fol. 4<sup>vb</sup>–5<sup>ra</sup>: 'Omne regnum in se divisum desolabitur et omnis civitas vel domus divisa contra se non stabit' ; compare Matthew 12. 25: 'Iesus autem sciens cogitationes eorum dixit eis *omne et omnis civitas vel domus divisa contra se non stabit*', and Luke 11. 17: 'ipse autem ut vidit cogitationes eorum dixit eis *omne regnum in se ipsum divisum desolatur et domus supra domum cadet*'.

<sup>11</sup> See Christine Moneera Laennec, 'Prophétie, interprétation et écriture dans l'*Avision*-Christine', in *Une femme de lettres*, pp. 131–38.

antiquity, as taught by Aristotle, Cicero, and Seneca. The model of the wise leader that she offers to the young dauphin is Solomon, presumed author of the Wisdom books, the major source of her Latin quotations in the first part of her treatise. The fact that Chapters 10–12 in Part I provide three texts from Proverbs 28–29 suggests that here she is not recalling texts from memory, but is deliberately looking for texts that support her theme that a ruler needs wise counsel, and that one should always distrust false friends who give deceitful advice. On their own, these texts from Proverbs might not seem to have a particularly political import. She reads passages, however, like ‘He who corrects a man shall subsequently find favour with him more than he who deceives through smoothness of the tongue’ (I. 10; Proverbs 28. 23) as of direct relevance to the need for honesty in public life. Some of the texts she assigns to Proverbs are remembered texts from elsewhere, as ‘The tongue kills more than the sword’ [I. 15; perhaps false recall of Psalm 56. 5 ‘and their tongue is a sharp sword’]. Some, like the final quotation in the *Livre de paix* (III. 48: ‘Semper in finem determinatur res’) ‘An affair is always determined in its end’, which she attributes to Proverbs 7, cannot be sourced at all.

What matters here is that Christine sees herself as drawing from and extending for a contemporary audience a Jewish tradition of practical, proverbial wisdom—a type of ‘common sense religion’—rather different from a more explicitly theological concern with prophecies of redemption, eschatology and end-time. This is the wisdom that she calls *prudence* and Aristotle knew as *phronesis*. Unlike Gerson or other ecclesiastical moralists, she makes only occasional appeal in the *Livre de paix* to the authority of the Church Fathers, mostly to Augustine.<sup>12</sup> She also makes two allusions to opinions of St Bernard, both more practical than theological.<sup>13</sup> On both occasions, the source for these quotations, like so many of her classical quotations, is the *Livre dou tresor* of Brunetto Latini.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> While she quotes from Augustine (I. 5, p. 64; II. 13, p. 105; III. 5, p. 123; III. 36, p. 173), there is no evidence that she has read these texts in Latin.

<sup>13</sup> She attributes quotations attributed to St Bernard in I. 4, p. 65: ‘Et ce conferme Saint Bernart disant que pour soy sauver et bien faire n’est ja besoing oster de soy delit de plaisance’ and III. 29, p. 160: ‘Si est bien à propos de lui ce que Saint Bernart dit: Mieulx vault troublé or que luisant cuivre’.

<sup>14</sup> *Li Livres dou Tresor de Brunetto Latini* II. 52. 9 and II. 52. 8, ed. Francis J. Carmody (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1948), p. 226; *The Book of the Treasure (Li Livres dou Tresor)*, trans. by Paul Barrette and Spurgeon Baldwin (New York: Garland, 1993), pp. 194–95; the same reference numbers are preserved in a new critical edition by Spurgeon Baldwin and Paul Barrett, *Li Livres dou Tresor*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 257 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2003), p. 205. Unfortunately, neither the translation nor the edition by Barrette and Baldwin identify the sources used by Brunetto Latini, as in the Carmody edition. On Christine’s debt to Latini, see also the paper of Glynnis M. Cropp in this volume.

Richards has observed that Christine was aware of patristic opinion in her writings. Yet the fact that she does not introduce explicit Latin quotations from them in the *Livre de paix* suggests that by 1413, she saw their authority as less important than that of Scripture and of classical writers.<sup>15</sup> She makes no comment about the role of the Church in contributing to peace. Rather her theme is that peace in the kingdom is an essential goal of all governance, and a good that can only be achieved through commitment to moral integrity and listening to prudent counsel. Peace is not to be achieved through deliberately setting out to intimidate others.

Sometimes Christine identifies as scriptural a quotation in fact from another literary source, as in the text of I. 3 (p. 62): 'There is great praise for a prince who knows how to govern peace well, [...] so that it turns to all and is loved by all'. In a marginal note to this passage, she corrects herself by citing the Latin phrase, 'Ad laudem regnantis trahitur si ab omnibus pax ametur' and attributing it correctly to Cassiodorus (in fact from the *Variae* I. 22, itself a pot-pourri of Stoic wisdom). It has often been argued that Christine's knowledge of such Latin quotations comes from the *Manipulus florum* of Thomas of Ireland a widely circulated anthology of classical and patristic wisdom, completed in 1306. A longer form of the quotation from Cassiodorus also occurs under the entry for *pax* in this anthology.<sup>16</sup> The fact, however, that Christine first attributes it to Scripture, suggests that she works here by memory rather than by looking up an anthology, and then only subsequently checks up (and here corrects) her identification of the source. Earlier on the margin of fol. 5<sup>rb</sup>, she supplies the Latin to another proverb that she first quotes in French, 'The glory of a ruler is leisurely peace'.<sup>17</sup> In fact, it is another passage from the *Variae* (II. 29) of Cassiodorus, but in this case, not quoted in the *Manipulus florum*.

The *Variae* are a favoured source for her Latin quotations.<sup>18</sup> Some she places in the margins, others at the beginning of individual chapters. From my searching through the on-line edition of the *Manipulus florum*, it seems that only three out of

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<sup>15</sup> Richards observes that she does not refer to the Fathers in her early writings, but that she clearly refers to their opinion, sometimes differing from them, 'In Search of a Feminist Patrology' (n. 9 above).

<sup>16</sup> The argument that Christine was derived her quotations from the *Manipulus florum* of Thomas of Ireland was first made by P. G. C. Campbell, *L'épître d'Othéa. Etude sur les sources de Christine de Pisan* (Paris: Champion, 1924), pp. 163–68, and repeated by Suzanne Solente, *Fais et bonnes meurs* I, lxvii; see Mary Rouse and Richard Rouse, *Preachers Florilegia and Sermons: Studies on the Manipulus Florum of Thomas of Ireland*, PIMS Texts and Studies, 47 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1979), pp. 213–14. An on-line edition has been prepared by Chris L. Nighman from the Venice 1493 incunable edition, but corrected by relation to 'the most authoritative manuscripts'. It is available at <http://info.wlu.ca/~wwwhist/faculty/cnighman/>.

<sup>17</sup> I. 3 5<sup>rb</sup>: 'Regnantis est gloria subiectorum otiosa tranquillitas' [*sic*].

<sup>18</sup> Cassiodorus, *Variarum libri duodecim*, ed. A. Fridh, CCSL 96 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1973).

seven quotations from the *Variae* of Cassiodorus could have been taken from this widely circulated anthology.<sup>19</sup> Because Christine attributes two of these three to Seneca, when the *Manipulus florum* correctly assigns them to Cassiodorus, I am doubtful that this particular anthology was in fact used by Christine for the *Livre de paix*.<sup>20</sup> This parallels the observation made by Parussa that the Latin texts quoted in the *Epistre Othea* cannot have come from any known version of the *Manipulus florum*, or from the *Chapelet des vertus*, translated into French from Italian in the early fourteenth century.<sup>21</sup>

The faulty attributions attached to a number of the Latin texts quoted by Christine in the *Livre de paix* do make me think, however, that she frequently did rely on some sort of anthology of classical quotations for some, though not all of her texts. This is not just the case with the two passages from Cassiodorus's *Variae* attributed to Seneca. She attributes to Cassiodorus in II. 2 one very poetic passage about the joy of peace as like a calm sea after a storm that actually comes from the *Facta et dicta memorabilium* (II. 4) of Valerius Maximus, yet correctly assigns another passage about the value of moderation to Valerius in III. 33. Christine could be drawing from her own compilation of notes from her reading (occasionally mistaking a source in her records). Valerius Maximus, an author she used extensively in other writings, had been translated by Nicholas de Gonesse, in collaboration with Simon de Hesdin, a copy of which was in the library of Charles V (III. 18). There is a passage from Cicero's *De inventione* II. 56. 169 about the two parts of utility (soundness or tranquillity, and power or capacity) that she attributes to Seneca's *De beneficiis* (III. 29); yet she correctly attributes to Cicero another passage about all things existing in virtue (I. 4), from the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* IV. 17. 24, 19. 27, identified as his *Ars nova*. She incorrectly attributes to Lucan one excerpt from the *Panegyrics* of Claudian, about being a strong ruler (III. 36: *Carmen* 8. 261–62), but correctly identifies Claudian as author of another passage (II. 14: *Carmen* 8. 269) about speaking openly to the king. She attributes two verse extracts to Juvenal, one (about pleasure being the mark of a weak mind) correctly to the *Satires* (III. 38: *Satires* XIII. 189), the other (appended to the margin of II. 4) a verse transmitted with the poems of Tibullus, but by Lygdamus, another Roman poet. The most likely explanation for these faulty attributions is that Christine was drawing on an anthology relatively rich in classical texts, though not wholly reliable in its identification of sources. The *Manipulus florum* of Thomas of Ireland, compiled in the early fourteenth century

<sup>19</sup> There were multiple versions as well as florilegia, however, of this influential text; Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers, Florilegia and Sermons*, pp. 197–207.

<sup>20</sup> Richards observes that the *Manipulus florum* could not have been her sole source, 'In Search of a Feminist Patrology', pp. 281–82.

<sup>21</sup> Parussa makes this observation in relation to the *Epistre Othea*, pp. 46–53 and 55–56; she also notes (p. 54 n. 91) the argument of E. Beltran that Christine used the *Communiloquium* of Jean de Galles rather than the *Manipulus florum*, 'Christine de Pizan, Jacques Legrand et le *Communiloquium* de Jean de Galles', *Romania*, 104 (1983), 208–28.

and perhaps the most widely circulated of late medieval anthologies of quotations (indeed widely printed into the seventeenth century) is heavily patristic in its sources. A more classically oriented anthology, deserving further study, is the *Liber philosophorum moralium antiquorum*. This was originally an Arab anthology of ancient texts, translated into Latin (from a Castilian version) in the second half of the fourteenth century (from a Castilian translation of an Arab anthology from the eleventh century) and put into French by Guillaume de Tignonville, a close friend of Christine in the debate about the *Roman de la rose*.<sup>22</sup> Given this friendship, de Tignonville may well have assisted Christine in her scholarly endeavours. Given the wide diffusion of patristically based anthologies, such as the *Manipulus florum*, it is significant that her sympathies should lie very firmly with classical rather than patristic authors as sources of authority in the *Livre de paix*.

Although strictly speaking Cassiodorus belongs to the patristic period, the kind of practical wisdom that Christine culls from his *Variae*, perhaps through some unidentified anthology, is strongly moralistic rather than theological in its emphasis. Cassiodorus, who was responsible for collecting and preserving so much classical learning in the sixth century, also became the author to whom a significant pseudonymous literature was attached, most significantly the *De amicitia Christiana* of Peter of Blois, written in the twelfth century. The number of references she attributes to this treatise—aphorisms about the divine origin of friendship (III. 9), about love as the root of all good things (III. 23), and about the sweetness of friendship (III. 47)—suggests that she may have known the treatise as a whole, as could also be the case with Cicero's *De amicitia* (quoted in I. 4, II. 14, III. 7, 26, 42). Some of Cicero's sayings, of which she records the Latin, such as about nothing being more lovable than virtue, were common currency. While Willard correctly identified Brunetto Latini as a source for many her quotations, this anthology did not provide her with Latin texts, unless her copy of the *Livre dou tresor* (to which she once makes explicit reference) had been annotated with Latin tags.<sup>23</sup> Another is a

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<sup>22</sup> The complex story of the transmission of this text is summarized by Curt F. Bühler in his introduction to the translation made into English from the French by Stephen Scrope (who also translated Christine de Pizan), William Worcester, and an anonymous translator, *The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers*, Early English Text Society, 211 (London: Oxford University Press, 1941; reprinted 1961), pp. x–xiii. The Latin text was studied and edited by Ezio Franchescini, 'Il "Liber Philosophorum Moraliū Antiquorum"', in *Memorie della Reale Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*, Anno cccxxvii (1930), ser. VI, vol. 3.5, pp. 354–99 and *Atti del Reale Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti*, Anno academico 1931–32, tomo 91.2, pp. 393–597. Bühler (pp. xiii–xv) notes a large number of manuscripts of Tignonville's translation, as well as a number of early printed editions of the French version, edited by Robert Eder, 'Tignonvillana inedita', *Romanische Forschungen*, 33 (1915), 851–1091.

<sup>23</sup> Cicero, *De amicitia*, 28, quoted without identification on fol. 7<sup>rb</sup> (I. 4, p. 64); Willard, *Paix*, p. 185, observes that this passage, like many other texts quoted by Christine, also occurs in Brunetto Latini, *Livre dou tresor* II. 2, referring to the edition of *Li livres dou tresor* by B. Chabaille (Paris, 1863), rather than to that of F. Carmody, who introduces a very different set

summary of Cicero's account of the vision of Archytas of Tarentinum, about the human need to share insight (*De amicitia* 88, reported in II. 14), which may have been taken from an independent source. She also quotes in truncated form a very rare Latin text of Cicero, *de provinciis consularibus*, which she attributes to Cicero rather than Tullius, as her normal practice. Describing this author as a 'prince rommain de tres grant savoir' (III. 3) rather than as Tullus, it is unsure whether she thought Cicero was different from Tully, with whom she was very familiar. In any case, she quotes the text because it expressed a basic insight with which she concurred.

When Christine quotes only a single quotation from a relatively obscure classical author, she is very likely relying on an anthology rather than a complete text. This may well be the case for passages about the requirement that learning be useful, from the thirteenth-century pseudo-Boethian *De disciplina scoliarum* (III. 34). Similarly, passages about silence as a sign of wisdom, attributed (III. 35) to Aristotle (in fact from Petrus Alfonsi's *Disciplina clericalis*) and about the ideal of peace from Prudentius, *Psychomachia* (III. 2) could be from anthologies. Yet Christine refers with such frequency to a number of classical authors, that, even if she is relying on an anthology, she has become very familiar with the major ethical themes of classical thought. What is very evident from the *Livre de paix* is that she sees these Latin quotations, not in the Petrarchan mode as a learned preserve through which classically educated scholars can display to each other their scholarly erudition and their detachment from the practical concerns of government, but as a reservoir of practical wisdom, just like the writings of David and Solomon in the Old Testament. Her fascination is with how practical wisdom, *prudence* or *phronesis* for Aristotle, could be made available through nuggets from the past.

Given the criticisms that Christine had made of Ovid in the arguments about the *Roman de la rose*, it is perhaps noteworthy that she quotes from Ovid's poetry on a number of occasions, once each from the *Epistulae ex Ponto* and the *Fasti* (III. 19 about a good leader regretting the need to be fierce, and III. 12 about nobility having to be careful about the untrustworthy, here glossed as the *menu peuple*), and three times from the *Metamorphoses* (II. 15, III. 27 and III. 40). She had drawn on the *Ovide moralisé* extensively in her *Epistre Othea*. In the *Livre de paix* she is more interested in his observations about the foibles of human nature, such as the need for sharpness of the mind (II. 15) than in his satires about love. Her ability to translate and discuss texts that she cites in Latin provides a valuable contribution to debate about whether in her earlier writings she was familiar with Ovid's writing in the original.

The Roman author who provides her with the most frequent chapter headings is Seneca, cited once from the *De beneficiis*, four times from the *De clementia*, and

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of chapter divisions. Brunetto's anthology does not provide, however, any of the original Latin texts that he translates. Christine refers explicitly to the *Tresor* in III. 38 (p. 175): 'il est recité ou tresor' (a passage referring to Latini II. 77. 2, in the Carmody reference system, retained in the Barrette-Baldwin edition and translation; see above n. 14).

four times from the *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium*. There are also many more passages that Christine refers to in French within her treatise. Her Latin comprehension of classical Latin is evident in one particularly long and poetic passage from Seneca's *De clementia*: 'Just as trees that are cut back regenerate with many branches by bearing forth many kinds of shoots, so royal cruelty increases the number of enemies; for the parents and children of those who are killed, as well as neighbours and friends, succeed to the place of individual people' (II. 4). Christine successfully translates the whole sentence, but accidentally omits a phrase in copying out her text—a rare slip in her Latin transcription, otherwise of a very high standard.<sup>24</sup> A theme that she likes drawing out from Seneca is the Stoic ideal of remaining above the cut and thrust of adversity. Above all a ruler should be merciful, and not resort to cruelty (III. 1, 17). Speaking truth must override all else (III. 31). With great skill she argues that these themes about what makes a good ruler are fundamentally the same as those pursued in the Bible by Solomon.

Perhaps the most important author whom Christine quotes in Latin is Aristotle. She very likely would have known the translations made by Nicholas Oresme in the late fourteenth century of Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Politics*, to which she refers in III. 18 as having been commissioned by Charles V.<sup>25</sup> Yet her frequent quotations in the *Livre de paix* from the Latin text of Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Politics*, suggest that at least by 1412, Christine was seeking to demonstrate to her peers that she was as fully informed of the key Latin texts that shaped her intellectual tradition as any cleric.<sup>26</sup> In the second part, she makes a particular point of culling passages from the *Politics*

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<sup>24</sup> See above n. 2.

<sup>25</sup> See the editions by Albert Douglas Menut, *Maistre Nicole Oresme. Le Livre de éthiques d'Aristote, Published from the Text of Ms. 2902, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, with a Critical Introduction and Notes* (New York: Stechert, 1940) and *Maistre Nicole Oresme. Le Livre de politiques d'Aristote, Published from the Text of the Avranches Manuscript 223, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, n.s. 60, Part 6* (Philadelphia, 1970). See also Claire Richter Sherman, 'Some Visual Definitions in the illustrations of Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* and *Politics* in the French Translation of Nicole Oresme', *Art Bulletin*, 59 (1977), 320–30 and 'A Second Instruction to the Reader from Nicole Oresme, Translator of Aristotle's *Politics* and *Economics*', *Art Bulletin*, 61 (1979), 468–69, and more fully *Verbal and Visual Representation in Fourteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

<sup>26</sup> Christine quotes from the Latin text of the *Ethics* in II. 13, 14, 17, 18 and III. 21, and from William of Moerbeke's translation of the *Politics* I. 2, 1253a26 (III. 4, p. 119), also *Auctoritates Aristotelis* XV. 10: 'Seuissima est iniusticia ferens arma. Aristotiles in Politicis'. I have not succeeded in identifying her quotations: 'Magnanimitate regnum in precio est. Aristotiles in Politicis' (II. 13, p. 105); 'Homines magni intellectus et voluntatis sunt naturaliter aliorum domini et rectores. Aristotiles in Politicis' (II. 14, p. 106) is also very similar to a paraphrase in *Auctoritates Aristotelis* xv. 1, ed. by Jacqueline Hamesse (Louvain: Université catholique de Louvain, 1972, 1974), p. 252 [perhaps a gloss on *Politics* 1, 1252a31–b5; I am indebted to Cary J. Nederman for this reference].

and the *Ethics* that deal with individual virtues, such as magnanimity (II. 13) and fortitude (II. 17, 18), but also relate to Aristotle's key insight that man is a social animal, and that a ruler should never keep too much in solitude (II. 14). Whether she was culling from an anthology, or directly from these texts themselves, it is clear that she had grasped key insights into Aristotelian ethical and political philosophy. The single excerpt that she quotes from the Latin translation of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (about art as teaching that provides a discipline advantageous for learning; III. 13), is in fact from the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. She also quotes a single sentence from Aristotle's *Sophistical Refutations* (III. 14) about how paralogisms or sophistical arguments can easily be generated from statements that seem uncontroversial. Again, this may come from an anthology rather than from a whole treatise. Even if she drew from someone else's repertory, she was certainly an acute reader, able to pick up nuggets of wisdom from wherever she found them.

In the third part of the *Livre de paix*, Christine also quotes extensively from the *Alexandreis* of a late twelfth-century poet, Walter of Châtillon. Walter's epic poem, written in Latin that is often quite demanding, celebrates the life and military victories of Alexander the Great, interspersed with frequent philosophical reflection presented as the wisdom of Aristotle to his great protégé.<sup>27</sup> The passages that Christine quotes from the *Alexandreis*, in particular from its first book, make evident that she enjoys the vivid poetic exposition of this epic poem, widely copied and glossed in the medieval schools between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries, as much as she sympathizes with its teaching about the behaviour of a good ruler. While Alexander does not always come out as a saintly ruler in this epic, Walter uses speeches given to Alexander to comment on what makes a good ruler, citing the poem as evidence of the teaching of Aristotle: 'You have the substance of virtue: put it into action' (I. 83, quoted in II. 13). She has a taste for Walter's vivid, and sometimes rather obscure similes: 'Do not exalt those whom nature teaches should lie humble, for a bitter torrent, swollen by the rains, flows as an everlasting flood' (I. 86–88, quoted in III. 11), to make a political point, in this case that inappropriate leaders from the common people should not be entrusted with positions of power in the state. I see no reason to doubt that she may have absorbed the *Alexandreis* in extenso. Not content with simply taking a straightforward philosophical aphorism from Aristotle or Seneca, she revels in the literary artistry of a Latin poet and borrows from it to give colour to her own prose: 'if you devote yourself to Bacchus and Venus, though you subdue all else, you have come beneath the yoke' (I. 167–68 quoted in III. 37); 'Let justice, celebrated by the ancients, therefore drive your actions, and through you, may final justice, which has left the earth for the stars above, be recalled from on high' (I. 175–77 quoted in III. 39).

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<sup>27</sup> Walter of Châtillon, *Alexandreis*, ed. by Marvin L. Colker (Padua: Antenora, 1978); translated by R. Telfryn Pritchard (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1986) and more recently by David Townsend, *The Alexandreis of Walter of Châtillon* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).



Another Latin author for whom Christine has a particular fondness in the *Livre de paix*, was Guido Faba, the thirteenth-century contemporary of Boncompagna da Signa, and author of an influential synthesis on the art of epistolary composition as well as a *Summa de viciis et virtutibus*. The particular text from which Christine quotes, titled *Exordia summe* has not been identified.<sup>28</sup> In any case, Christine attributes to Guido no fewer than five different quotations from this *Summa* in the *Livre de paix*. Their wording is often close to that Seneca, such as in passages about the importance of clemency for a ruler (II. 10), placing a measure on one's strength (III. 8), the value of ordered love (*ordinata caritas*) (III. 22), the value of dealing with the root of a matter (III. 28), and the truth that the person who denies giving charity will face the same consequence himself (III. 45).<sup>29</sup> Their vivid common sense struck a particular chord with Christine, even though his suggestions had been formulated almost two centuries earlier. Christine's fondness for an influential theorist of Latin prose suggests that she enjoyed and valued reading about how to write Latin prose in a way that was shaped by practical moral and ethical wisdom, even though she applied these skills to writing in French rather than Latin. The Latinate quality of her prose, with its extended periods, is itself testimony to her fascination with a Latin literary style that is not always so easy for a modern reader to navigate.

Christine invokes just a single Latin quotation from the *De regimine principum* of Giles of Rome, an aphorism about the need for a ruler to know all things, something that he cannot achieve on his own (III. 14).<sup>30</sup> Whether Christine was more influenced

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<sup>28</sup> It seems unlikely that she is referring to Guido Faba, *Summa dictaminis*, ed. by A. Gaudenzi, *Il propugnatore*, 3, 13–14 (1890), 287–338 and 3, 16–17 (1890), 345–93, and *Dictamina Rhetorica Epistole*, ed. by A. Gaudenzi, *il propugnatore*, n.s., 5, 1 (1892), 86–129 and 5.2 (1892), 58–109, reprinted in the series, *Medium Aevum, Collectanea di studi e testi*, dir. da G. Vecchi, *Artes triviales*, VIII, 3 (Bologna, 1971). Her extracts do not occur either in the *Summa* edited by Virgilio Pini, 'La *Summa de Vitiis et Virtutibus* de Guido Faba', *Quadrivium*, 1.1 (1956), 41–152, with a critical edition on pp. 97–151; see also E. H. Kantorowicz, 'An 'Autobiography' of Guido Faba, *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies*, 1 (1943), 253–80, reprinted in Kantorowicz, *Selected Studies* (Locust Valley, NY: Augustin, 1965), pp. 194–212. Guido Faba also wrote an as yet unedited *Exordia vel proverbia ad commune bonum et ad utilitatem omnium scholarium tam Bononiae quam alibi commorantium*, surviving in manuscripts of Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Clm 639, ff. 54–68<sup>va</sup>; Clm 16124, ff. 43–55; Clm 21565, ff. 47<sup>va</sup>–64<sup>ra</sup>; Clm 22293, ff. 92–103<sup>va</sup>, 105; 92–103<sup>va</sup>).

<sup>29</sup> The quotations attributed to Guido occur in II. 10 (fol. 39<sup>ra</sup>) 'Speciali tamen hiis est agendum clemencia quos fouet vita laudabilis et honesta'; III. 8 (fol. 58<sup>rb</sup>) 'Ea demum potencia tuta est que viribus suis modum inponit'; III. 22 (fol. 79<sup>rb</sup>) 'Ordinata caritas neminem reputat alienum sed omnes recoligit tempore oportuno. Ordinata caritas illa videtur existere que a suis novit domesticis inchoare'; III. 28 (fol. 87<sup>vb</sup>) 'Satis videtur esse laudabile ut fomentum rami senciant a radice'; III. 45 (fol. 106<sup>va</sup>) 'Judicium sine misericordia fiet illi qui nummam denegat postulanti.'

<sup>30</sup> I have not yet identified this passage: 'Principis est omnia cognoscere quod non potest fieri in solitario. Egidius in Libro de Regimine Principum' (II. 14, p. 106). She frequently

by this widely studied text than this single quotation would suggest is difficult to know. In its way, the *Livre de paix* was another work in the same genre, a mirror for princes from which those born to rule in an aristocratic society, could learn. The treatise of Giles of Rome was a Latin theoretical discussion which other lay readers and writers could adapt to their own ends.<sup>31</sup> Christine intended her own *Livre de paix* to be more accessible, writing the treatise in French and directing it at a young prince, who she hoped would return France to order and stability. Her goal was not to debate in the company of other intellectuals, but to share the insights of practical wisdom from both scriptural and classical traditions for a very immediate end, the pursuit of peace. She combined the wisdom of Solomon, Aristotle and Seneca with that of more recent writers, like Walter of Châtillon and Guido Faba, to create a fresh synthesis of ancient and very practical wisdom. At the same time, she was not an uncritical reader of classical authors, or medieval figures like Abelard and Heloise, as her intervention in the debate about Jean de Meun's *Roman de la rose* makes clear.<sup>32</sup>

Christine had been brought up in the court of a ruler, Charles V, who gave particular encouragement in the late fourteenth century to translators in order to make the traditions of classical antiquity accessible to a wider audience, not necessarily privileged with a high Latin education. She was also a close friend of Gilles Malet, in charge of the library of Charles V from 1369 until his death in 1411, through whom she could gain access both to its collection and the translators whom Charles V encouraged.<sup>33</sup> As Serge Lusignan has so well described, Charles V fostered a remarkable transformation of French culture through encouraging these translations, and thus forging a new literary culture for France. Christine admires the way Charles V effectively used his library as a tool of government.<sup>34</sup> This was as important a renewal of classical scholarship as anything that Petrarch had achieved during the second half of the fourteenth century. In the *Livre de paix*, as in her life of Charles V, Christine draws attention to that great king's love of learning and the

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draws on the translation of Giles by Henri de Gauchi, as shown by Solente, *Fais et meurs*, I, p. lxii–lxvi.

<sup>31</sup> See Charles F. Briggs, *Reading and Writing Politics at Court and University, c. 1275–c. 1525* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>32</sup> On her intervention in the debate over *Le Roman de la rose*, see Mews, 'Interpreting Abelard and Heloise in the Fourteenth and early Fifteenth Centuries: The Criticisms of Christine de Pizan and Jean Gerson', in *Chemins de la pensée médiévale. Études offertes à Zénon Kaluza*, ed. by Paul J. J. M. Bakker, Emmanuel Faye, and Christophe Grellard, *Textes et Études du Moyen Âge*, 20 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), pp. 709–24.

<sup>33</sup> Solente identifies his influence on *Fais et meurs*, I, p. lxxvi–lxxvii.

<sup>34</sup> Serge Lusignan, *Parler vulgairement: les intellectuels et la langue française au XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris: Vrin, 1987). See also Peter F. Dembowski, 'Learned Latin Treatises in French: Inspiration, Plagiarism, and Translation', *Viator*, 17 (1986), 255–69.

extent of his library. She saw what she was doing in the *Livre de paix* as in fundamental continuity with those ideals of making known the riches of practical wisdom preserved both in Scripture and in the writing of classical antiquity. Christine was raised on ideals of respect for learning, but she criticized the limitations of a humanism that dwelled too much on scholarly elitism and misogynist ideals. In the *Livre de paix*, she urged the young Louis to emulate his grandfather, Charles V, and to apply the wisdom of both Scripture and the ancient philosophers, to the situation of France, as her own contribution to the ever arduous task of marking out a path to peace.

LATIN QUOTATIONS IN THE *LIVRE DE PAIX*  
 [texts given a false attribution marked with an asterisk]

Psalms 8. 3	I. 1
Psalms 33. 15	I. 3 mg
Psalms 56. 5	I. 15*
Psalms 84. 11	III. 2
Psalms 86. 3	I. 2 mg
Psalms 97. 1	I. 1 mg
Psalms 105. 3	II. 5
Psalms 110. 10	I. 5 mg
Psalms 121. 7	I. 2
Psalms 121. 7	I. 3 mg
Psalms 125. 5	II. 1
Proverbs 13. 10	I. 9*
Proverbs 17. 1	III. 25
Proverbs 20. 28	III. 18
Proverbs 28. 23	I. 10
Proverbs 29. 5	I. 11
Proverbs 29. 16	I. 12
Wisdom 6. 1	I. 9 mg
Wisdom 6. 26	I. 7
Ecclesiasticus 8. 11	II. 3
Ecclesiasticus 37. 20	III. 32
Ecclesiastes 8. 14	I. 13
Daniel 13. 46	I. 1 mg
Matthew 12. 25 [Luke 11. 17]	I. 3 mg*
Matthew 21. 9	I. 1 mg
Matthew 5. 9	I. 3 mg
Luke 1. 14	I. 2 mg
Luke 19. 38	I. 2 mg
John 19. 35	I. 8
Peter 3. 10–11	I. 14

Colossians 3. 14	III. 45
I Timothy 1. 5	III. 45
Aesop, <i>Fables</i>	III. 10
Aristotle, <i>Ethics</i>	
I. 2 95b12–13	III. 21
I. 5 97b11	II. 14
III. 7 15a32.	II. 18
III. 12 17a25	II. 17
IV. 3 24a1	II. 13
Aristotle, <i>Politics</i>	
?	II. 13*
I. 2 1252a31-b5	II. 14* [gloss?]
I. 2 1253a26	III. 4
Aristotle, <i>De sophisticis elenchis</i>	
16	III. 14
Boccacio, <i>Liber de casibus virorum illustrium</i>	
VI. 5	III. 41
Boethius, <i>Consolation of Philosophy</i>	
I. 6. 20	III. 44
II. 2. 9	II. 8 mg
II. 6. 16	III. 4
Ps-Boethius, <i>De disciplina scolarium</i>	
I. 14	III. 34
Cassiodorus, <i>Variae</i>	
I. 23	I. 3 mg
II. 29	I. 3 mg
III. 27	II. 6 [attrib. Seneca]
VI. 11	III. 6
VII. 27	III. 15
VIII. 2	III. 2
VIII. 19	I. 5 mg [attrib. Seneca]

Cicero, *De amicitia*

17	III. 26
23	III. 7
28	I. 4
88	II. 14*
88	III. 42

Cicero, *De inventione*

II. 56. 169	III. 29 [attrib. Seneca, <i>De beneficiis</i> ]
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Cicero, *De provinciis consularibus*

33	III. 3
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Ps-Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*

I. 2. 3	I. 4 [attrib. Aristotle, <i>Rhetorica</i> ]
IV.17.24, IV.19.27	I. 4

Claudian, *Panegyrics*

VIII. 261–62	III. 36 [attrib. Lucan]
VIII. 269	II. 14

Giles of Rome, *De Regimine principum* (unidentified)

II. 14

Guido Faba, *Exordia summae* (unidentified)

II. 10  
III. 8  
III. 22  
III. 28  
III. 45

Horace, *Epistulae*

I. 2. 57	II. 8 mg
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Julius Caesar, *Commentarii Belli Gallici*

VII. 29. 6	III. 3
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Juvenal, *Carmina*

XIII. 189	III. 38
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Lygdamus, *Elegia*

II. 4 mg [attrib. Juvenal]

Ovid, *Epistulae ex Ponto*

I. 2. 122 III. 19

Ovid, *Fasti*

II. 226 III. 12

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*

III. 54 II. 15

III. 543, 548 III. 27

XIII. 140–41 III. 40

Petrus Alfonsi, *Disciplina clericalis*

2 III. 35 [attrib. Aristotle]

Peter of Blois, *De amicitia* [attrib. Cassiodorus]

3 III. 47

9 III. 9

42 III. 23

42 III. 24

Prudentius, *Psychomachia*

I. 769 III. 2

Sallust, *De bello iugurthino*

83 II. 3

Sallust, *De coniuratione Catalinae*

20. 4 III. 47

Seneca, *De beneficiis*

I. 11. 6 III. 30

Seneca, *De clementia*

I. 5. 4 II. 12

I. 8. 7 II. 4

I. 8. 6 III. 17

I. 11. 4 III. 1

Seneca, *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium*

27.3 I. 4

66. 39, 32, 39 I. 5

67. 15 II. 11

79. 18 III. 31

Valerius Maximus, *Facta et dicta memorabilium*

II. 4	II. 2 [attrib. Cassiodorus]
IV. 1. 9	III. 33

Vegetius, *Epitoma in rei militari*

I Prol.	I. 4
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Vergil, *Aeneid*

VI. 832	III. 3
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Walter of Châtillon, *Alexandreis*

I. 83	II. 13
I. 85	III. 43
I. 86–88	III. 11
I. 167–68	III. 37
I. 175–77	III. 39
I. 178–81	III. 46
VIII. 400–03	III. 46



## Bartolo da Sassaferrato as a Possible Source for Christine de Pizan's *Livre de paix*

EARL JEFFREY RICHARDS

Of all of Christine de Pizan's works, the *Livre de paix* on first glance is arguably one of the most disjointed—a compilation, to be sure, as Christine herself calls it. Its rambling appearance raises the question of whether it even has a coherent intent.<sup>1</sup> Yes, it is framed by the expected initial dedication to the youthful and somewhat hapless Louis de Guyenne and its conclusion commending the 'bon prince'. Even by dating the stages of the work's composition (Part I begun 1 September 1412, completed 30 November 1412, but the rest of the work, presumably planned but left unfinished until 3 September 1413, and then presented to the Duke of Berry on 1 January 1414), Christine herself makes it seem as though the work lacked a consistent authorial intention. This 'writer's itinerary' invites comparisons with the prose insert in the *Livre de la mutacion de Fortune* (coming after v. 8748, ed. by Solente, II, pp. 156–70) where Christine confessed that she was simply too ill to put her work into verses,<sup>2</sup> or with the dates she assigns to her other works (the letter to Eustache Deschamps, for example, is dated on 10 February 1403, the feast of Saint Scholastica, patron of intellectual women).<sup>3</sup> Superficially at least one

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<sup>1</sup> The first serious and very insightful attempt to uncover a systematic rhetorical and thematic program and unity in the *Livre de paix* was undertaken by Tania van Hemelryck, 'Christine de Pizan et la paix', in: *Au champ des escriptures: III<sup>e</sup> colloque international sur Christine de Pizan, Lausanne, 18–22 juillet, 1998*, ed. by Eric Hicks and others (Paris: Champion, 2000), pp. 663–89. Her article breaks new ground.

<sup>2</sup> See the analysis of this passage presented by Nadia Margolis, 'Christine de Pizan and the Jews: Political and Poetic Implications', in *Politics, Gender, and Genre: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Margaret Brabant (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), pp. 53–73.

<sup>3</sup> I analyze the importance of this date in my article 'The Lady Wants to Talk: Christine de Pizan's *Epistre a Eustache Mourel*', in *Eustache Deschamps and his World: French Courtier-*

would suspect that the work is a very loose didactic treatise for the education of the dauphin offered to him on his turning eighteen. In general, scholars such as Suzanne Solente and Charity Cannon Willard have simply given a brief summary of its chapters and stressed its derivative character, based on Christine's use of Latin epigraphs drawn from the most heterogeneous sources possible. The comparatively close connections between text, allegory, and commentary typical of the earlier *Epistre Othea* are lacking in the *Livre de paix*. The eclectic format and loose structure of the individual chapters in turn only reinforces the impression of the work's overall disjointedness. A cautionary note however, needs to be sounded: just as scholars hitherto regard the *Livre de paix* as disorganized, scholars also had originally regarded the *Livre de la cité des dames* as a disordered compilation based largely and loosely on Boccaccio, and only close scrutiny of the thematic arguments underlying the sections has shown how careful the argumentative structure of the *Cité des dames* actually is. In this paper I will suggest that the *Livre de paix* will seem less incoherent the better we come to understand Christine's models and sources, including, as I hope to demonstrate, the writings of the pre-eminent commentator on Roman law, Bartolo da Sassoferrato.

### *Source Studies and the Cohesion of Christine's Livre de paix*

The hitherto unresolved contradictions in the scholarly discussion of the sources of the *Livre de paix* can be shown on the basis of a single example. The fact that Christine knew and cited Aegidius Romanus (Giles of Rome)—both in the original and in the French translation of Henri de Gauchi—has long been recognized in Christine scholarship. In her edition of *Fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*, Suzanne Solente demonstrated that Gauchi's French translation was Christine's source, but Solente herself also admitted that Christine must have known the original as well, since she quotes Aegidius Romanus in Latin in the *Livre de paix*. Christine's simultaneous use of a Latin source and its French translation—after all, ten manuscripts of the Gauchi are recorded in the royal library to which Christine had access—means that her use of a Latin source does not correspond to the simple, that is, usually assumed one-to-one relationship of source text to its occurrence in a second text. Thanks to Constant Mews's extremely insightful investigation of Christine's Latin sources in the *Livre de paix*, new conclusions about Christine's use of sources in the *Livre de paix* are possible. While Berenice Carroll has made substantial contributions to Christine scholarship and maintained that peace is a constant theme in all of Christine's works,<sup>4</sup> I would say that justice as a pre-

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*Poet, his Work and his World*, ed. by Deborah Sinnreich-Levi (New York: AMS Press, 1998), pp. 109–122.

<sup>4</sup> Berenice A. Carroll, 'Christine de Pizan and the Origins of Peace Theory', in *Women Writers and the Early Modern British Political Tradition*, ed. by Hilda L. Smith (Cambridge:

condition to peace is even more prevalent in Christine's writings. Now, thanks to Mews's work, we can dispense with the arguments about Christine's slavish use of Thomas of Ireland which have burdened Christine studies from the outset by turning source studies unnecessarily into a mechanical kind of bookkeeping.<sup>5</sup> She went back to Thomas to correct her recollection of key texts, but her point of departure was certainly elsewhere. I will try to show that in fact her point of departure in the *Livre de paix* was Bartolo da Sassoferrato, in part encouraged by Jean Gerson's contemporary campaign against the apologists of tyrannicide.

How cohesive are the parts of the *Livre de paix*? Is there a spiralling effect? After all, on the surface, Part I stops because there was nothing more to talk about, *cause de matiere de paix defaillie*. Then Part II takes up an intermediate phase, followed by a commentary, where the chapters suddenly grow drastically shorter and the Latin epigraphs longer. There is no manuscript evidence to suggest that Part I was completed before the others—no *cahiers* as we have of her lyric, no *Livre de Christine*, to use the term Christine used for her own author's copy, the importance of which James Laidlaw has consistently demonstrated.<sup>6</sup> If we take the dating which Christine assigns each part of the book as a partial fiction, then Part I is focused as a commentary on the events prior to the date she gives, Part II to the events prior to its completion, and then Part III as her final commentary, then the overall structure of the work leads to the point of how important it is to govern the people well. This would only be a point taken in an Italian context by an advocate of the *populares*, and here we come to the affinity between Christine's work and that of Bartolo da Sassoferrato, though I am getting well ahead of my argument here. After all, it is striking that in concluding third parts of both the *Livre du corps de policie* and the *Livre de paix* are devoted to the people. It bears recalling, as the German Romanist Franz Walter Müller first noted in his 1947 study of the use of the word 'nation' in medieval French sources,<sup>7</sup> Christine was the first author in the French language to extend the meaning of nation beyond the king and princes of the blood to include all

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Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 22–39, and 'On the Causes of War and the Quest for Peace: Christine de Pizan and Early Peace Theory', *Au champ des escriptures: III<sup>e</sup> Colloque international sur Christine de Pizan, Lausanne, 18–22 juillet 1998*, ed. by Eric Hicks and others (Paris: Champion, 2000), pp. 337–58.

<sup>5</sup> On Christine's use of Thomas, see my article: 'In Search of a Feminist Patrology: Christine de Pizan and the *glorieux docteurs* of the Church', in: *Une femme de lettres au moyen âge, études autour de Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Liliane Dulac and Bernard Ribémont (Orléans: Paradigme, 1995), pp. 281–95.

<sup>6</sup> See James C. Laidlaw, 'The Cent Balades: The Marriage of Content of Form', in *Christine de Pizan and Medieval French Lyric*, ed. by Earl Jeffrey Richards (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), pp. 53–82, and the bibliography of that article.

<sup>7</sup> Frank Walter Müller, 'Zur Geschichte des Wortes und Begriffes 'nation' im französischen Schrifttums des Mittelalters bis zur Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts', *Romanische Forschungen*, 58/59 (1947), 247–321.

the people, which did not hinder her of course from condemning the excesses of the Cabochiens in Part III of the *Livre de paix*. Is this 'populist' orientation perhaps connected to a larger argument about the nature of tyranny and to the question of political legitimacy itself?

*Tyrannicide as a Unifying Theme of the Livre de paix and the Problem of Sources*

A more careful look at the *Livre de paix* will show us that it presents a series of coherent but extremely subtle reflections on the problems of political legitimacy and tyrannicide arising in the wake of the assassination of Louis of Orleans on 23 November 1407, and that the probable source for Christine's reflection was the pre-eminent Italian jurist Bartolo da Sassoferrato, whose influence on Christine during the Quarrel of the Rose and in her treatment of rape in the *Cité des dames* I have recently demonstrated.<sup>8</sup> Apart from her link to Italian jurisprudence, particularly to the commentaries of Roman law which the French for their part distrusted as covert imperial propaganda, Christine's preoccupation with the issue of political legitimacy prior to the *Livre de paix* is evident in her biography of Charles V and her *Corps de policie*.

Significantly, there was a four year lull between the assassination of Louis of Orleans and the polemic which Jean Gerson launched in what would be a long campaign both against the chief apologist of this murder, Jean Petit, and also against Johannes von Falkenberg's similar defense of tyrannicide. Gerson began by presenting counter-arguments to the Parisian synod, obtained an condemnation of Petit's arguments on 23 February 1414. But if we read the *Livre de paix* in tandem with Jean Gerson's writings repudiating the claims advanced by Jean Petit to justify the murder of Louis of Orleans, specifically Gerson's 'Discours au roi contre Jean Petit' from 4 September 1413,<sup>9</sup> the first thing which one notices is that Gerson's speech was held only one day after Christine resumed writing the *Livre de paix*, or at least when Christine said she resumed her work. The longstanding intellectual friendship between Christine and Gerson suggests that many of Christine's writings can be read in the context of an ongoing dialogue with Gerson, and the examples of contact between the two authors are well known, ranging from their shared opposition to the *Roman de la rose*, or Christine's use of Gerson's *Montaigne de contemplation* in her own *Le Livre de l'advison Christine* or of his various sermons

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<sup>8</sup> 'Christine de Pizan and Medieval Jurisprudence', *Contexts and Continuities, Proceedings of the Fourth International Colloquium on Christine de Pizan (July 2000)*, ed. by Angus J. Kennedy and others (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 2002), pp. 747–66.

<sup>9</sup> Published in Gerson's collected works: Jean Gerson, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by P. Glorieux, 10 vols (Paris: Desclée, 1960–73), *L'œuvre polémique*, x, pp. 165–284.

in *Le Livre des trois vertus*, or specifically his sermon *Vivat rex* in her *Corps de policie* or the fact more than twenty years later the two authors both penned two of the earliest works celebrating the victories of Joan of Arc.<sup>10</sup> When one compares Gerson's *Discours* with arguments from the *Livre de paix*, several remarkable parallels turn up, but there is also one significant difference: Gerson speaks of involving the bourgeois in the process of governing whereas Christine speaks of involving all the people and quite specifically differentiates between bourgeois and *peuple*.<sup>11</sup> Christine's term in the *Corps de policie* had been *université du peuple*, which may be an allusion to Macrobius's phrase *universitas populi* or to Marsilius of Padua's well-known term *universitas civium et fidelium*.<sup>12</sup> I would suggest that Christine's interest in the *populares* reflects the influence of Bartolo, but again, I am getting ahead of myself. The importance of Bartolo in no way diminishes the influence of John of Salisbury on Christine, especially as this fact has been ably demonstrated by Cary Nederman and Kate Forhan.<sup>13</sup>

Let us return to the question of cohesion in the *Livre de paix*. In looking at the three parts, at least one argument, the criticism of avarice, *convoitise*, is made in all of them (*Paix*, I. 11, II. 7; and III. 24). The one problem arising here is the often fragmentary nature of the entire *Livre de paix*: what actually holds this loose compilation together and what are its major arguments? Now, being against avarice is fairly standard, after all, Paul made the argument in I Timothy 6. 10, *radix omnium malorum est cupiditas* [greed is the root of all evils], and, in what is perhaps the most famous example in English medieval literature, Chaucer takes it as the Pardoner's text in the Prologue to his tale. Being against avarice is like being against sin—it is expected, except for the single fact, noted (and misquoted) by Willard in passing (*Paix*, p. 197) that John of Salisbury in the *Policraticus* had explicitly connected *cupiditas* with the rise of tyranny.<sup>14</sup> The chapter title runs, 'De ambitione, et quod

<sup>10</sup> I examine their intellectual exchanges in more detail in my essay 'Christine de Pizan and Jean Gerson: An Intellectual Friendship', *Christine de Pizan 2000, Studies in Honour of Angus J. Kennedy*, ed. by John Campbell and Nadia Margolis (Amsterdam: Rodolphi, 2000), pp. 197–208.

<sup>11</sup> The general discussion of the term people in Christine offered by Pierre André Sigal is excellent, but does not examine the possible medieval Latin sources for Christine, see: Pierre André Sigal, 'Christine de Pizan et le peuple', *Contexts and Continuities*, Proceedings of the Fourth International Colloquium on Christine de Pizan (21–27 July 2000), ed. by Angus J. Kennedy and others (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 2002), III, pp. 811–28.

<sup>12</sup> Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, II. vii. 5 and Marsilius of Padua, *Defensor pacis*, I. 7 §3 v. 2–5; Wilhelm Kölmel, 'Universitas civium et fidelium: Kriterien der Sozialtheorie des Marsilius von Padua', *Medioevo: Rivista di storia della filosofia medievale*, 5 (1980), 49–80.

<sup>13</sup> Cary J. Nederman, *Medieval Aristotelianism and its Limits: Classical Traditions in Moral and Political Philosophy, 12th–15th Centuries* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997) and Kate Langdon Forhan, *The Political Theory of Christine de Pizan* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).

<sup>14</sup> John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, VII. 17, ed. by C. C. J. Webb (Oxford: Clarendon Press),

cupiditas, stultitiam comitatur, et quis sit ortus tyrannidis; et de diversis viis ambiciosorum' [On ambition, and that greed accompanies foolishness, and what is the origin of tyranny, and about the different ways of the ambitious].

As John H. and Mary A. Rouse long ago established, John of Salisbury was the first European writer to expound the doctrine of tyrannicide fully and explicitly, so that it is no wonder that John's text is so important for Christine.<sup>15</sup> In fact, John of Salisbury's celebrated discussion of tyrannicide in *Policraticus*, VIII. 20–21 turns out to probably be Christine's source in *Livre de paix*, III. 5, so that it is safe to conclude that Christine composed her work, somewhat like Gerson who explicitly cites John of Salisbury's arguments from the *Policraticus* in disproving Jean Petit, in full knowledge but also in full disagreement with John of Salisbury's claims. When, on 8 March 1408, some four months later, Jean Petit preached his justification of the murder of Louis of Orleans—which led Charles VI to pardon Jean sans Peur—he took the citation 'radix malorum cupiditas' as his sermon's text and argued on the basis of eight *veritates* that the murder of Louis was a commendable tyrannicide. Subsequently, of course, Gerson invested enormous energy in rejecting Jean Petit's argument, as the dossier assembled by Glorieux demonstrates. In light of the previous use of the topic of *cupiditas* in the discussion of tyrannicide, Christine's invoking the theme of *convoistise* in the *Livre de paix* is not a rehashing of medieval lore on one of the seven deadly sins, but a pointed political choice on Christine's part.

Remarkably, Christine's epigraph of III. 24 of the *Livre de paix* attributes the Pauline axiom to Cassiodorus (taken from his *Expositio in psalterium*, at the beginning of the commentary on Psalm 38) where, in fact, Cassiodorus is quoting St Paul. Christine's reference to Cassiodorus is an example of source studies taken in a wider sense than a one-to-one correspondence of source text to application. Cassiodorus, of course, was responsible for originally establishing the programme of the penitential psalms (Psalms 6, 31, 37, 50, 101, 129 and 142 in the Vulgate numbering), a genre in which Christine also was active, so it would seem clear that she must have known the *Expositio*. Cassiodorus begins his commentary on Psalm 38 with a discussion of the Hebrew term 'idithum' (usually taken now as a proper name) which he glosses as a saintly person able to 'jump over' the enticements of vice and who in effect is the exemplum of the just man, *persona [...] sanctae conuersionis, quae [...] formam nobis iusti hominis praebet*.<sup>16</sup> Verse 8 of the

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II, pp. 160–66.

<sup>15</sup> Richard H. and Mary A. Rouse, 'John of Salisbury and the Doctrine of Tyrannicide', *Speculum*, 42 (1967), 698–709.

<sup>16</sup> Cassiodorus, *Expositio psalmorum*, ed. by M. Adriaen, CCSL 97 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1958), p. 383 (PL 70, cols. 279–80): 'Idithum enim hebraeum nomen est, quod lingua latina dicitur transilitor; non qui gressibus aliquid transit aut saltu corporis hiantia quaeque transmittit, sed qui supra mundi istius uarietates in ea iam puritate consistit, ut futurae tantum beatitudinis praemia consequatur. Ergo in hoc psalmo persona introducitur sanctae

Vulgate version of the psalm concludes that a man can lay up treasure and not know who will enjoy it, whereupon Cassiodorus speaks of *avaritia* and quotes the Pauline *radix omnium malorum cupiditas*. The importance of the entire Cassiodorus text is its specific discussion of the just man, and Christine, who otherwise cites Vulgate passages more or less accurately from memory, seems to have been very deliberate in directing the reader to check Cassiodorus.

Christine was interested in the just man for very specific political reasons, and I believe she took her cue from Dante who similarly situates his journey as the search for a just man at the beginning of the *Commedia*. Please recall that the source text for the three beasts in Dante's *Inferno* I was Jerome 5. 6—the chapter, however, begins with a famous and overlooked plea which explains in effect Dante's journey: 'run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeth the truth and I will pardon it' [*circuite vias Hierusalem et aspiciate et considerate et quaerite in plateis eius an inveniatis virum facientem iudicium et quaerentem fidem et propitius ero eius*]. Dante's *Commedia* and *De monarchia* will turn out to supply an important context for evaluating the *Livre de paix*. Christine might not know exactly who the just man for the political realm is, just as Dante never names *il Veltro*, but she was certainly convinced that Jean sans Peur was the opposite of the just ruler, which in late medieval terminology, following Isidore of Seville, one of Christine's sources in the *Mutacion de Fortune*, was a tyrant. And long before John of Salisbury made the connection between *cupiditas* and tyranny, Isidore had made the same claim: 'Iam postea in usum accidit tyrannos vocari pessimos atque inprobos reges, luxuriosiae dominationis cupiditatem et crudelissimam dominationem in populis exercentes' [Already it later became the practice for tyrants to be called very bad and wicked kings, exercising greed for excessive domination and most cruel domination over peoples].<sup>17</sup> Certainly from Christine's point of view, Jean sans Peur exemplified someone who showed *luxuriosiae dominationis cupiditatem et crudelissimam dominationem in populis*. Put another way, Christine's reference to Cassiodorus leads us into a world of reflection on political legitimacy and on the relationship between justice and tyranny. It also appears that Christine does not so much follow the traditional opposition of *rex* vs *tyrannus* but *homo iustus* vs *tyrannus*. For a French audience in the late fourteenth- and early fifteenth century, the connection between greed and tyranny lay in excessive taxation, as Oresme made clear in 1380 in his gloss of the relevant passages of Aristotle's *Politics*. Oresme's translation reintroduced the word tyrant

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conuersationis, quae humanas quidem illecebras transilierat, sed adhuc gaudia futura poscebat. [...] Idithum iste, quem diximus uitiorum nocentium transilitorem, formam nobis iusti hominis praebet.'

<sup>17</sup> *Etymologiae*, IX. iii, 20, ed. by Lindsay.

into French, so that it is striking that Christine is one of the first writers after Oresme to use the term.<sup>18</sup>

The noun *tirant* occurs twenty-one times in the *Cité des dames*, and at least four other times elsewhere in Christine's work. An inspection of the example of 'tirant' found in Tobler-Lommatzsch shows that the adjective 'tiran' was most consistently used in twelfth- and thirteenth-century medieval French to mean 'villainous'—and it seems that the word regained its political sense after the appearance of Oresme's translation. It was a relatively uncommon word in late medieval French, and, apart from some very early examples, was clearly associated in Christine's time with Oresme's translation. Of course, Christine was hardly limited by French usage, because besides the use of the term in medieval Latin texts at her disposal, Christine had only to think how Dante had explicitly spoken of the Italian cities filled with tyrants in *Purgatorio*, 'Che le città d'Italia tutte piene / son di tiranni'.<sup>19</sup> *Le città d'Italia* furnished Christine precisely, in many of her writings, but particularly in the *Corps de policie*, examples for discussing popular rule. Obviously Christine was not an advocate of democracy, which in Christine's time retained its original force of 'mob rule', but she did seek to incorporate the people into the political decision-making process, in part, I would argue because she could directly observe how Jean sans Peur manipulated the Cabochiens before they in fact ended up by turning on him.

Tyranny actually also turns out to be one of the most frequent topics taken up by Christine in Part III of the *Livre de paix*.<sup>20</sup> The epigraph of the opening chapter of Part III is taken from Seneca's comments on clemency and tyranny and that clemency was a guarantee of dynastic continuity, a subject of immediate pertinence for Christine in view of Charles VI's periodic insanity and of course one reason for instructing the dauphin, Louis of Guyenne. The good prince exhibits clemency for it strengthens his rule, the opposite is the case with tyrants: 'et par le contraire est desplaisant la maudite puissance non durable des tirans' (*Paix* III. 1, 116) [and by contrast, the cursed power, not lasting, of tyrants is disagreeable]. And Christine continues: 'Ceste vertu fait hair tirannie, cruauté et toute mauvaistié, convoitise, qui sont vices tres impertinans à seigneurs' [This virtue makes hated tyranny, cruelty, and all wickedness and greed, very unfitting to lords]. In this chapter she praises the clemency of Charles VI as an exemplum for his son. The dynastic implications, found in Seneca, are also clearly present here.

<sup>18</sup> The general background for Christine's knowledge of Oresme has been clearly set forth by Sylvie Lefèvre, 'Christine de Pizan et l'Aristote oresmien', *Au champ des escriptures. III<sup>e</sup> colloque international sur Christine de Pizan, Lausanne, 18–22 juillet, 1998*, ed. by Eric Hicks and others (Paris: Champion, 2000), pp. 231–50.

<sup>19</sup> *Purgatorio*, 6, lines 124–25

<sup>20</sup> *Paix*: 'tirannie' I. 11, pp. 78, 79; III. 5, p. 122; passim, III. 10, p. 129; III. 23, p. 150; 'tirans' II. 4, p. 94; III. 1, p. 116; III. 4, p. 121; III. 19, p. 143; III. 22, p. 149; 'tyrannorum Seneca', III. 1, p. 115; 'Denis le Tirant', III. 5, p. 122; III. 24, p. 153.



*Tyrannicide and Medieval Legal Commentators*

The difficulty of determining Christine's intent often stems from our incomplete knowledge of the context for her remarks. Consider how Christine near the beginning of her life of Charles V discusses Charles's exercise of the *vertu de justice*.<sup>21</sup> It is the first example of royal justice presented there and remarkably, Christine tells how Charles ruled in favour of a Jew wronged by a Christian. Christine uses this example to demonstrate Charles's belief in equal justice before the law: 'et vult le roy que la simplece du Juif fust vainqueresse de la malice du crestien; et, comme il feist droit aux Juifs, n'est mie doute qu'à toute personne vouloit que il [i.e. droit] fust entierement tenus' [and the king wished that the simplicity of the Jew should overcome the malice of the Christian; and as he did right for the Jews, it is never to be doubted that he wanted right to be completely preserved for all people].<sup>22</sup> But if we read this incident too quickly, we might forget that justice for a Jew could hardly be taken for granted in France in 1405, because Charles VI had banished all the Jews of Paris in 1393. The implicit and not too subtle point is that the son might imitate his father's adherence to equal justice. Two cases dealing with women follow this first example: the first was one Christine cited three times in her writings, here in the life of Charles but also in the *Chemin de long estude* and *Livre de paix*—it is the story how the emperor Trajan stopped a military campaign to climb off his horse and do justice for an aggrieved widow. Christine then segues to Charles's life and tells how Charles helped a widow who petitioned for justice when a servant-girl in her household had been raped by a servant of the king. The accused, having admitted his guilt, was summarily executed.<sup>23</sup> All of these examples demonstrate, royal equity, that is, equity understood as the king's prerogative to adapt the law and an issue central to the commentators on Roman law.

Christine also refers explicitly to the Bolognese Commentators on Roman law in a passing remark in her life of Charles V: she recommends that the princes consult 'foreign commentators' on matters of law:

Et ce seroit chose très convenable et pertinent aux causes des cas divers et particuliers, dont la cognoissance leur [=les princes] est imputée et de droit commise, de quoy ne pevent avoir introduction des loys, se n'est par estranges expositeurs, et tout par paresce d'un petit de temps souffrir l'exercitacion et labour d'estude.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *Fais et bonnes meurs*, I, p. 23.

<sup>22</sup> *Fais et bonnes meurs*, I, p. 61.

<sup>23</sup> 'vint une fois, nostre roy estant au chastel [...] une femme vesve, devers lui, à grant clamour et lermes requerant justice d'un desserviteurs des offices de la court, lequel par commandement avoit logié en sa maison, et cellui avoit efforciée une fille, que elle avoit. Le roy moult ayré du cas lait et mauvais, le fist prendre et, le cas confessé et ataint, le fist pendre sanz nul respit à un arbre de la forest,' *Fais et bonnes meurs*, I, pp. 61–62.

<sup>24</sup> *Fais et bonnes meurs*, I, pp. 16–17.

[And it would be a very fitting and appropriate thing for the sake of different and individual cases, the knowledge of which is imputed to them [i.e. princes] and of the law at stake, about which there cannot be any introduction to the law, if not by foreign commentators, and without permitting a little time to endure exercise and effort in study.]

Since Pope Honorius III had forbidden, under pain of excommunication, the teaching of Roman (though not canon) law in Paris in his decretal *Super specula* of 16 November 1219, a prohibition not lifted until 1679, Christine's advice is nothing less than spectacular. This single reference to the Bolognese commentators speaks volumes for the importance of considering Christine's works within the context of medieval jurisprudence, even though perhaps this suggestion might seem farfetched at first glance.<sup>25</sup>

What is significant is that Christine in the *Livre de paix* repeats the earlier recommendation that the wise prince needs legal counsel, whereby Christine's use there of the term *clercs legistes* in combination with her knowledge of Roman law commentaries would suggest that she meant quite specifically the Bolognese commentators. There is a much larger pattern in Christine's career at work here: namely that Christine's apparently solid knowledge of Roman law led her in part much earlier to criticize the *Roman de la rose*. When she first speaks of the never ending, unresolved glossing in the *Rose*, she alludes to the *gloses d'Orlians* in her letter to Pierre Col of 2 October 1402: 'si as tres bien prouvey que maistre Jean de Meung, quant il tant perloit de exciter l'oeuvre de Nature, que il entendoit en mariage! Dieux, comment est ce bien prouvé! Voire, come dist le proverbe commun des gloses d'Orliens, qui detruisent le texte' [you have shown very well that master Jean de Meun, when he spoke so much about arousing the work of Nature, what he understood about marriage! Gods, how this is well shown! See, as the common proverb says of the glosses of Orleans, which destroy the text].<sup>26</sup> Why does Christine mention the *glossa Aurelianensis* as *le proverbe commun* as though her reader would immediately understand the reference? The reason is that the most prominent reference to the destructive glosses of Orleans comes at the beginning of Bartolo da Sassoferrato's commentary on Roman law, perhaps one of the most widely read legal texts of the late Middle Ages. Bartolo's unsurpassed importance for late medieval jurisprudence is concisely summarized in the phrase, *nemo jurista nisi sit bartolista* [nobody is a jurist unless he is a Bartolist].<sup>27</sup> Despite Bartolo's

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<sup>25</sup> It is important for me to note that my suggestion that Christine knew Bartolo's writings has failed, for example, to convince the Dutch scholar and Bartolo expert, Frank P. W. Soetermeer who kindly read some of my earlier work. See Frank P. W. Soetermeer, *Utrum ius in peciis, Die Produktion juristischer Bücher an italienischen und französischen Universitäten des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts*, trans. by Gisela Hillner (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2002).

<sup>26</sup> Hicks, p. 144.

<sup>27</sup> These 'destructive glosses' have long preoccupied me, in part because of the affinity between destructive glossing and the very influential theories of Deconstruction, both of

significance within medieval literary culture, literary scholars have hitherto ignored his possible impact on vernacular writers, especially in late medieval Italy, a surprising oversight given the fact that Cino da Pistoia ('Dante's friend'), Petrarch and Boccaccio were jurists.

Bartolo's Renaissance editors explained that *glossa Aurelianensis quae destruit textum* is a *sententia Jacobi*, that is, the opinion of Jacques de Révigny, an influential legist from Orleans. As Bartolo's commentary makes clear, the Bolognese commentators were acutely conscious of the potentially destructive nature of glossing itself. The origin of this remark, I surmise, may well have been a legendary debate over sixty years before between the Bolognese Francesco d'Accorso (Franciscus Accursii, died 1293, who appears in Dante's hell with Brunetto Latini, was the son of the better known legist Accorso da Bagnola [Accursius], died 1260), and the Orléanais Jacques de Révigny. The young Frenchman, still a novice, apparently trounced the older Italian. The proverb on the rivalry between Bologna and Orleans, *glossa Aurelianensis quae destruit textum*, seems to have been transmitted orally until Bartolo incorporated it into the opening remarks on the nature of the constancy of justice at the beginning of his commentary. Thus, when Christine equates Jean de Meun's constant promise of a gloss with a *glossa Aurelianensis*, she singles out his systematic, albeit witty subversion of referentiality, a technique which destroys not only the text, but ultimately also reason, and with reason, justice as well. While Gerson criticizes the *Rose* in a court of Canon law, Christine moves the proceedings, as it were, to the court of Roman law.

### *Bartolo as Christine's Source*

Besides this first demonstrable use of Bartolo as a source for Christine, a second example can be found in the one of the most often cited and most stunning passages in the *Cité des dames* when Christine characterizes capital punishment for rapists promulgated in Rome after the suicide of Lucretia, as a law which was *convenable, juste et sainte*—'fitting, just and holy'. This description of capital punishment for rape is found neither in Boccaccio, Christine's immediate source, nor in Livy, who was Boccaccio's source.

Christine's remark was probably motivated by an observation she found in Bartolo. The legal compilations of customary law for northern France, such as the so-called *Grand coutumier*, dated traditionally from early in the reign of Charles VI,

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which aim at the destruction of reason. Besides my essay in the Glasgow acts on medieval jurisprudence which form the basis for the discussion of the previous use of Bartolo in Christine, I would signal my earlier essay on the *gloses d'Orliens*, see my essay: '*glossa Aurelianensis est quae destruit textum*: Medieval Rhetoric, Thomism and Humanism in Christine de Pizan's Critique of the *Roman de la rose*', *Cahiers de recherches médiévales* (XII<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> s.), 5 (1998), 247–63.

do not speak of rape. By contrast, the *Établissements de saint Louis* sketchily brings up the example of a young woman deflowered by her nobleman guardian. The verdict is extremely specific case here, for the rape is seen as a violation of female virginity held in trust by a male noble peer: the guilty nobleman is condemned to lose his fiefdom if the virgin slept with him willingly (the forfeited fief is thus the compensation for the loss of virginity), but he is sentenced to death by hanging if force was involved, that is, if the deflowering amounts to rape.

Deflowering and raping a virgin are pragmatically equated by customary law which grimly regards the loss of virginity as a commodity of exchange among male noblemen. Customary law has nothing to say about capital punishment for rape as fitting, just and holy, customary law is silent. The limited discussion of rape within the *Corpus juris civilis*, found in the chapter *De raptu virginum*, while calling rape a *tam detestabile crimen*, is a model of clinical detachment, with no regard for the victims. Instead it focuses on very narrow and concrete circumstances which justify capital punishment for the perpetrator rather than on the specifics of the crime itself because rape either entails, in the case of virgins and widows, possible violations of property belonging to men, or requires, in the case of married women, a determination whether the rape amounts to adultery, which was the underlying issue with Lucretia, whose case Christine takes up. Lucretia's chastity was well known, even as a patristic topic (e.g. Tertullian, *Ad martyras*, 4; *De exhortatione castitatis*, 12; Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, I. 19, etc.). When Christine incorporates the traditional remark the establishment of a republic in Rome after the banishment of kings resulted directly from the rape of Lucretia, the unmistakable implication is that a new, republican community stems from the promulgation of a fitting, just and holy law punishing rapists.

Christine's observation that capital punishment for rape is fitting, just and holy may stem in part from her personal sense of indignation, but it also is founded no less on Bartolo's commentary. Among all the commentators on the *Corpus*, only in Bartolo's remarks is there anything close to Christine's memorable phrase *convenable, juste et sainte*. Bartolo first queries rhetorically in his commentary whether it makes a difference if a man rapes a woman, his wife or a prostitute, especially since the *Corpus juris civilis* excludes sexual violence against a spouse or prostitute as rape: *quaero, dicit lex vel statutum, quod rapiens mulierem puniatur: modo vir rapuit mulierem, vel sponsam, vel mulierem de lupanari?* [I ask, says the law or a statute, that someone raping a woman be punished, when a man has raped a woman, or a spouse or a woman from a brothel]. No, Bartolo replies, citing another famous Italian legist named Baldo degli Ubaldi (Baldus de Ubaldis), for this would be a faulty understanding and law must be sacred and unsullied: *Dic[o], quod non: secundum Bald[um] in l. ambigua ff. de leg. [.] quia iste esset intellectus vitiosus, & lex debet esse sancta, immaculata, & sic debet eius interpretatio* [I say no, because according to Baldo on this law, there are ambiguities about the law, that this was a false understanding, and the law ought to be holy, spotless and that such should be

its interpretation].<sup>28</sup> Bartolo's wording here, *lex debet esse sancta, immaculata*, seems to be behind Christine's description, especially since she prefaces the phrase 'fitting, just and holy' with another telltale phrase, *comme dient aucuns*, a tag she invariably uses for references to the corpus: 'a cause de cel outrage fait a Lucrece, comme dient aucuns, vint la loy que homme mouroit pour prendre femme a force, laquelle loy est convenable, juste et sainte' [because of this outrage done to Lucretia, as some say, come the law that man should die for taking a woman by force, which law is fitting, just and holy].

Now, my overall argument is that Christine's treatment of tyranny in the *Livre de paix* is probably indebted to Bartolo because once again, only Bartolo, of all medieval commentators available to Christine, is clearly on the side of the *regimen ad populum* and like Christine sees in legal erudition the answer or remedy to tyranny. But in order to demonstrate this point, I first need to examine two examples from the *Livre de paix* which reveal the influence on Christine of contemporary writers on political legitimacy: first, the description of the visit of the Holy Roman Emperor to Paris and second, the house divided motif.

On 4 January 1378, the French king, Charles V, welcomed his uncle, the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles IV, to the city of Paris. Charles IV of Bohemia had been named emperor by the pope in 1346, but was not crowned until 1355 when he essentially renounced re-establishing German sovereignty in Italy. His Golden Bull of 1356 set the pattern for future imperial elections. In 1378, he decided to visit his nephew in Paris. The imperial cortege began from Saint-Denis while at the same time the royal cortege set out from the Louvre. Two contemporary sources describe the ceremonial protocol surrounding the visit with very differing emphasis: the *Grandes chroniques de France*, compiled for Charles V himself (BnF fr. 2813) and Christine.<sup>29</sup> In fact, Christine describes the cortege twice in her works, first in extensive detail in her biography of Charles V (III. 33 and following) from 1404/5 and again in the *Livre de paix* (III. 29), from 1414. I have chosen this example of Christine's interest in the ceremonial exchanges between the Holy Roman Emperor and the French king not only because Christine, as is often the case in the *Livre de paix*, is citing, or perhaps better, revising her life of Charles V in a new and very specific political context in support of the young dauphin, Louis of Guyenne, against the intrigues of Jean sans Peur, but because it also illustrates what is one of the arguments of this paper, that Christine in writing the *Livre de paix* in fact took her cue from a growing body of commentary on the political allegiances within the Holy Roman Empire—and that literary historians have overlooked this connection which

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<sup>28</sup> Bartolo da Sassoferrato [Bartoli a Saxoferrato], *Commentaria* (Basel, 1588), *Codicis liber nonus*, Tit. xiiij, *De raptu virginum, seu viduarum, necnon sanctimonialium*, p. 348.

<sup>29</sup> Françoise Autrand, 'Mémoire et cérémonial: la visite de l'empereur Charles IV à Paris en 1378 d'après les *Grandes chroniques de France* et Christine de Pizan', in *Une femme de lettres au moyen âge*, ed. by Dulac and Ribémont, pp. 91–104.

would have come naturally to a writer born in Venice—and that Christine in turn applied materials in this literature on the subject of the ‘house divided against itself’ which turns up in the *Livre de paix* as the epigraph of l. 3. Was this citation a reaction to Patristic commentary on the topic or was she responding to a different tradition?

A search of the on-line index of the Patrologia for *domus divisa* and *regnum divisum* produces only meagre results (*domus divisa*, twenty-six times [11-2-3-9-1, including Prudentius, PL 60, col. 76] and *regnum divisum*, forty-one times [14-4-5-15-3]). Even Thomas Aquinas was not interested in the topic, and he mentions it, as best as I can determine, only once (*Catena aurea in Matthaeum*, cap. 11–12). The topic however shows up far more prominently in political writers, including Giles of Rome’s *De regimine principum*, Dante, *De Monarchia* l. 5, and Pierre du Bois, *De recuperatione sanctae terrae*). In all of these cases, the thrust of the argument is fairly obvious—that political unity is a desideratum in itself. Perhaps the most immediate occurrence of the tag as far as Christine was concerned was in the Golden Bull of the Emperor Charles IV, the same Charles IV whose visit to Paris Christine recounts. The proclamation, which Charles IV promulgated in part to regulate imperial elections through the system of prince electors, begins, ‘Carolus quartus divina favente clementia Romanorum imperator [...]. Omne regnum in se divisum desolabitur, nam principes eius facti sunt socii furum’ [Charles IV, by divine favour Emperor of the Romans [...] Every kingdom divided in itself will be made desolate, for its leaders have been made companies of thieves] [225]/21.

A putative influence on Christine of commentaries from imperial writers on the *domus divisa* topic is important because it re-defines the context in which she wrote the *Livre de paix*. I believe that one very specific topic of political legitimacy within the Holy Roman Empire, namely the status of Venice, was Christine’s immediate tie to this body of political commentary. This connection is demonstrated by Christine’s references to the closing of the grand council in Venice, the so-called *serrata*, in 1297. As important as this event was in the social history of Venice, recent research has shown that contemporary Venetian chroniclers did not bother to mention it. Indeed, it appears that one of the earliest descriptions we have dates from 1423. All of the relevant Venetian documents are found in Gerhard Rösch, but as exhaustive and as useful as Rösch’s presentation is, he omits three other important sources who shed light on the creation of the Venetian system of government: Thomas Aquinas, Bartolo da Sassoferrato, and Christine de Pizan.<sup>30</sup>

Thomas Aquinas’s *De regimine principum* (1265–67), Book IV, Chapter 8 (from the portion actually completed by Ptolomy of Lucca) is entitled ‘Hic declarat melius esse in politia non perpetuare rectores: et respondet ad partem oppositam: ubi etiam dicit, nullum in Lombardia habere dominium, nisi per viam tyrannicam, duce

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<sup>30</sup> Gerhard Rösch, *Der Venezianische Adel bis zur Schließung des Großen Rats Sigmaringen*, 1989).

Venetiarum excepto' [Here he declares that it is better in a state not to perpetuate leaders; and he replies to the other side where he says that no one has lordship in Lombardy except tyrannically, apart from the doge of Venice].<sup>31</sup> This work of course predates the *serrata*, but Thomas (or Ptolemy) effectively gives the context in which the closure of the Grand Council took place: 'In partibus autem Liguriaie, Aemiliae et Flaminiae, quae hodie Lombardia vocatur, nullus principatum habere potest perpetuum, nisi per viam tyrannicam, duce Venetiarum excepto, qui tamen temperatum habet regimen: unde principatus ad tempus melius sustinetur in regionibus supradictis' [In the regions of Liguria, Aemilia, and Flaminia, which today is called Lombardy, no one can have a perpetual principate, except tyrannically, apart from the doge of Venice, who has a moderate government, so a principate is preserved for better times in the above mentioned regions] (p. 76, ed. by Joseph Mathis). He goes on to cite Aristotle in support of his claim, where the issue is the election of the appropriate rulers, and where Aristotle advises rulers be elected from the 'mediocres civitatis' because they are so powerful as to become tyrants and not so weak as to fall under the sway of the mob: 'Quod enim dicitur derogare politiae, non est verum, si eligantur idonei: alias, ut dictum est, corrumpitur politia. Idoneos autem Aristoteles tradit, in Polit. Lib. IV, mediocres civitatis, hoc est nec nimis potentes, quia de facili tyrannizant, nec nimis inferioris conditionis, quia statim democratizant.' [For what is said to detract from the State is not true if suitable people are chosen; elsewhere, as has been said, the State is corrupted. But Aristotle reports in Book IV of the *Politics* that suitable people are middling people in the city, namely not too powerful, because they easily become tyrannical, nor of too low a condition, because they immediately create mob rule.]

Bartolo da Sassoferrato also briefly mentions the Venetian form of governance in his treatise *De regimine civitatis*.<sup>32</sup> Significantly, one of the manuscripts of Bartolo's political treatises—*De tyranno*, *De regimine civitatis* and *De Guelphis et Gebellinis*—was copied in Paris in 1410. What is important is that Bartolo modified the standard antithesis *rex / tyrannus* into the opposition of *iudex / tyrannus*, as Diego Quaglioni has convincingly argued, and it is significant that Christine repeatedly recommends in the *Livre de paix* that the French king have good legal advisors—in a follow-up to her aside in her biography of Charles V that the princes would be well advised to seek the counsel of foreign commentators, i.e., the Bolognese commentators on Roman law. In other words, Christine saw legal scholars, what she calls *clercs legistes*, as the remedy for tyranny, much like Bartolo.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *De regimine principum ad regem Cypri*, ed. by Joseph Mathis, 2nd ed. Joseph Mathis, repr. (Turin: Marietti, 1971).

<sup>32</sup> The edition of this work is found in Diego Quaglioni, *Politica e diritto nel Trecento italiano, Il 'de tyranno' di Bartolo da Sassoferrato (1314–1357), con l'edizione critica dei trattati 'De Guelphis et Gebellinis', 'De regimine civitatis' e 'De tyranno'* (Florence: Olschki, 1983).

Here are her words from the *Livre de paix*:

et pour bien gouverner le fait de la policie de son royaume, vult *avoir notables clercs legistes* experts afin que par leurs consaulx selon ordre de droit peust toutes choses bien disposer dont lui en ensuivi que tant qu'il regna. (I. 6, p. 68) [...] Es autres estas sont compris clers et laiz, c'est assavoir *clers legistes* et autres sages, soient prelatz ou autres, ausquelz les lois aient apries droit de gouverner policie et communauté de toutes manieres d'estas de gens. Ycelz sont ydoinés à conseiller sur le fait de la justice, admonester le prince que bien soit gardée que les offices, (fol. 18) tant de la justice comme les autres, soient mis en bonnes mains et bailléz à gens congneuz et desquelz on sache la vie estre bonne. (I. 10, p. 76)

[And in order to govern well the execution of his kingdom's policies, there must be outstanding expert legal scholars so that [the prince] can skilfully, guided by their advice in accordance with the order of law, order all things which may fall to him as long as he rules. [...] In other estates are included scholars and laymen, that is, legal scholars and other wise men, either prelates or others, whom the laws have taught the right of governing the policies and community of all manners of estates of people. These are fit to counsel on the execution of justice, to admonish the prince that [justice] be well protected so that all offices, both of justice and of others, are placed in good hands and give to well-known people whose lives are known to be upright.]

There is much more work to be done in uncovering the influence of Bartolo's treatises on Christine—he also passes in review the governments of the various Italian cities as Christine does in the *Corps de policie*. But I would suggest that the study of sources for Christine cannot continue to ignore this important legal context.

One additional reason why Bartolo is so important for understanding Christine is that he explains the advantages of what he calls the *regimen ad populum*—and Christine scholarship has long been burdened with Christine's allegedly anti-democratic tendencies. While both Bartolo and Christine of course recommend a king as the best form of government, both speak out in favour of involving the people in government. Bartolo's commendation of the *regimen ad populum* in Pisa and Perugia bear scrutiny: Bartolo first criticizes the seditiousness of the Pisans and then suggests the solution would be, as in Perugia, the *regimen ad populum*:

quia illi pauci, ut naturaliter evenit, poterunt inter se dividi: ex quo in civitatibus occurrent rumores, seditiones, incendia et civilia prelia, ut sepe vidimus in civitate Pisarum Expediit autem huic populo, qui est in primo gradu magnitudinis, regi per multitudinem: quod vocatur regimen ad populum [...] videtur enim magis regimen Dei quam hominum. Hoc etiam experimur in civitate Perusiana, que isto modo regitur in pace et unitate, crescit et floret.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ed. by Quagliioni, *Politica e diritto*, p. 163.



[because those few people, as naturally happens, can be divided among themselves: from which rumours, plots, fires and civil conflicts arise, as we often see in the city of Pisa. But it suits this people who are in the first step of greatness, to be governed by a multitude: which is called government for the people [...] for it seems to be a government more of God than of men. We also experience this in the city of Perugia, which is governed in this way in peace and unity, and both grows and flourishes.]

Here we return to Christine's tie to Jean Gerson's 'Discours au roi contre Jean Petit' where Gerson attempts to involve the urban bourgeoisie in the process of government. Christine does one better by extending this expansion of the political realm to the people, whence her careful and subtle focus on *le peuple* throughout the third part of the *Livre de paix*. Christine was not a democrat, but she saw in the expansion of the process of government a solution to the problem posed by tyranny, and in this regard her solution was entirely original and, not surprisingly, consistent with her feminism. While the evidence is strong that the political context for Christine can be defined with reference to the tradition of the *clercs legistes*, to the Bolognese commentators, much more research is needed to test this suggestion.



## Prudence and Wisdom in Christine de Pizan's *Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*\*

MICHAEL RICHARZ

When in 1404 Christine de Pizan accepted Philip the Bold's order to write the biography of his eldest brother Charles, this allowed her not only to praise his deeds and remind her readers of better times for France and her own family, but also to write down her views about the duties of the prince concerning himself and the state by means of an exemplary *vita*. Thus, her *Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V* (hereafter simply *Fais et bonnes meurs*) must be considered a mirror for princes: the princely reader is urged to live a life of wisdom and virtue and is given a contemporary example of 'good government', in the biography of King Charles V.

This chapter deals with one aspect of Christine's book: the meaning of 'prudence' and 'wisdom' as they relate to the *Fais et bonnes meurs* as a mirror for princes. My goal is to show how Christine takes these notions from a system of virtues based on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* which she interprets according to her own ideal of the good ruler and finally explains by using the practical example of King Charles's politics. I shall first give some general explanation of the structure of the work. Christine divides her volume into three parts, each of them corresponding to one outstanding quality of the king: nobility of heart (*noblece de courage*), chivalry (*chevalerie*), and wisdom (*sagece*). Although at first glance these qualities seem to have equal standing, one must consider *noblece de courage* the pivot of Christine's theory of the ideal prince.

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\* I am grateful to Alan Crosier and Janice Pinder for assisting with the English version of this paper, and for supplying English translations, occasionally aided by the modern French translations of Hicks and Moreau.

While Part II addresses (sometimes with quite a lot of criticism) the function of the prince as 'supreme' knight and offers an introduction to the 'art of war', following Vegetius's *De re militari*, Parts I and III are about the king's virtue as an indispensable ingredient of the prince's nobility of heart. Wisdom and prudence being virtues and the main subjects of Part III, we must take a look at how reason ennoble the heart, and what consequences this has for the prince. Christine's own definition of nobility of heart adduces three constitutive qualities: longing for the higher things (*tendre à hautes choses*), love of good manners (*amer bonnes meurs*), and finally acting with prudence (*conduire ses faits par prudence*).<sup>1</sup>

By the higher things man must strive for, Christine means perfection and eternity: his moral and ethical completion, which leads him into the eternal presence of God.<sup>2</sup> In the Christian context this is achieved through a longing for God, and is crowned by access to God's heavenly realm. Therefore Christine mentions *celestieles choses* as the highest things to be reached for. Perfection in worldly life is reflected in the achievement of a good reputation (*le bien de renommée*). Thus the longing for God and for a good reputation can be understood as 'interior' and 'exterior' signs respectively of a morally impeccable life. While a good conscience is the interior mark of the knowledge of one's justification before God, a good reputation marks one's good standing in the world. Man is an example for his neighbour by his action. This applies particularly to the prince who, as the head of the state, holds the state together and sets the standards of its moral condition by his own behaviour. In this way he will also be an example if he loves 'good manners' (*amer bonnes meurs*) and

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<sup>1</sup> *Fais et bonnes meurs*, I. 4. References are to the part and chapter of the *Le Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*, ed. by Suzanne Solente, 2 vols (Paris: Champion, 1936–40).

<sup>2</sup> *Fais et bonnes meurs*, I. 4: 'Tendre à hautes choses, comme dit Aristote, povons entendre aux choses plus parfaites et de plus longue durée; sur quoy povons noter estre les plus suppellatis biens les celestieles choses, comme perpetuelles' [As Aristotle says, tending towards high things means tending towards the most perfect and long-lasting things: the most exalted goods are heavenly things, since they are eternal]. This idea is based on a sentence from the beginning of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, which says that all things naturally strive for perfection (*unaquaque res naturaliter appetit perfectionem sui*). Christine's Latin source is Thomas Aquinas, *In duodecim libros metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio* (hereafter cited as *In Metaphys.*), ed. by R. Spiazzi, 2nd edn (Turin: Marietti, 1971), I. 1. 2. S. Solente hints at this in *Fais et bonnes meurs*, I, p. 10, n. 2.; see Thomas Aquinas, *De regimine principum ad regem Cypri*, 2nd edn by Joseph Mathis, repr. (Turin: Marietti, 1971), I. 8; *Über die Herrschaft der Fürsten*, trans. by Friedrich Schreyvogel (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1971); Dante Alighieri, *Monarchia*, I. 1, ed. by Ruedi Imbach and Christoph Flüeler (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1989), pp. 61–63; and Dante Alighieri, *Convivio*, I. 1, ed. by Giorgio Inglese (Milan: Rizzoli, 1993), pp. 41–45. Finally Christine herself, *Fais et bonnes meurs*, I. 9, with another reference to the *Metaphysics* (*Met.*, I. 1. 4): 'comme de sa nature elle [the soul] tende au lieu, dont elle est venue, c'est assavoir à hautes choses' [as by nature the soul tends towards the place from which it came, towards high things].

acts with prudence (*conduire ses fais par prudence*). These two ways of conduct describe the prince's respect for the virtues which he is supposed to manifest. While 'good manners' refers to his personal conduct of life, *prudence* has to do with the prince's deeds as a holder of high office: his political action.

The prince is subject to certain norms, which Christine defines in her book. His longing for higher things (the worldly as well as the spiritual ones) must be seen as manifest not only in the pursuit of these norms, but also in their public promotion, by which the ideal prince consciously serves as an exemplar for his subjects and through which he achieves nobility of heart, and the consequences for his worldly and spiritual life mentioned above.

Christine's division of princely virtues, into those of his personal conduct of life on the one hand and those of *prudence* and *sagece* on the other, is reflected in Parts I and III of her work. The virtues mentioned in Part I are justice, clemency, kindness, humility, generosity, chastity, sobriety, veracity, charity, piety, and moderation. They are required to regulate the prince's everyday life. In this catalogue of virtues Christine accords prudence and wisdom first place. She makes it clear that these two dominate over the other virtues, and she points to their special importance for the prince as a person who acts for the sake of the whole state. While Part III gives a detailed account of prudence and wisdom, in Part I we are given a short introduction to the meaning of these two virtues. Those few lines can be cited here in full length:

Bon me semble, à parfaire l'entencion de nostre œuvre, que distintteement soit traittié des bonnes meurs et condicions d'icellui sage, dont nous parlons; et, comme prudence et sagece soit mere et conduisseriesse des aultres vertus, laquelle lui estoit instruction en tous ses fais, comme il y a paru ou procès de sa noble vie, povons ramener son esleue maniere d'ordre à l'égalité des nobles anciens bien renommez, si comme il est leu du sage empereur Helius Adrians, cy-devant aligué, lequel fu lettrez et instruit en toutes sciences, et si expert en rethorique qu'il sembloit que pensé [eust] à tout quan que il exprimoit de bouche. Ne dirons nous semblablement de nostre roy, lequel en son temps, nul prince n'ataigny en haultece de letreure, ne parleure, et prudent pollicie en toutes choses generament, comme plus à plain dirons à la fin de ce livre, si comme promis nous l'avons. (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, I. 22 )

[It seems proper, in pursuit of our intention in this work, to deal separately with the virtues and qualities of the wise king we are discussing. And, since prudence and wisdom are the mother and guide of all the other virtues, and informed all the king's actions as his noble life has shown, we can be sure that in the excellence of his way of life he was the equal of the great figures of Antiquity. We read, for example, of the wise emperor Hadrian (mentioned above) that he was literate and learned in all branches of knowledge, and so expert in rhetoric that it seemed as if every word issuing from his mouth was thought through. Can we not say the same concerning our king? For no prince of his time equalled him in depth of reading, fine speech, or prudent management in all things generally. More will be said about this at the end of the book, as promised.]

Despite its brevity, Christine's explanation is of great interest in connection with her discussion of prudence and wisdom in Part III. The princely reader gets a brief introduction to it, and he is prepared for the later more detailed discussion of the subject. *Prudence* and *sagece* are at the top of the list of virtues and guide the prince on 'acting well'. For Christine, 'acting well' means precisely the *haultece de letreure, [...] parleure, et prudent pollicie en toutes choses*, by which she compares King Charles V to the Roman emperor Hadrian. What Charles and Hadrian had in common was the ability to express the right things in the right way and to pursue wise and prudent politics: Charles managed to fortify his kingdom which was ravaged by the war with England, while Hadrian protected the Roman Empire against the threat of the Barbarians. Therefore for Christine successful politics depends in the first place on the intellectual capabilities of the prince. It is probably also in this way that we have to understand the superiority of wisdom in comparison to the other virtues. Moral qualifications like those being dealt with in Part I are needed for good government, but on their own they do not lead to successful politics. Neither do the prince's military skills, which by the way Christine commends in an uninvolved king, deliberating over strategy well away from the real fighting. The state can only be directed well if the prince possesses the necessary wisdom and puts it into action. This realization of wisdom in action is called *prudence*. Christine explains this circumstance to her princely reader on the basis of Aristotle's theories of science in the *Metaphysics*, as we will see in greater detail in what follows.

### *Christine's Conception of Science and her Derivation of Prudence as a Scientific Discipline*

Christine's conception of science, which she explains in Part III of the *Fais et bonnes meurs*, is based on St Thomas Aquinas's commentary on the *Metaphysics*. Although this translation and commentary of the Aristotelian text had been cited by many authors of the Late Middle Ages, Christine was the first to translate excerpts from it into French.<sup>3</sup> According to Aristotle, wisdom consists of five other qualities which can be gathered into a theoretical and a practical part. The theoretical qualities are *entendement* (intellect), *science* (knowledge), and *sapience* (the insight into the higher things obtained by the acquisition of knowledge).<sup>4</sup> Practice consists in putting into action theoretical knowledge, and appears as *art* and *prudence*.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See Liliane Dulac and Christine Reno, 'L'Humanisme vers 1400, essai d'exploration à partir d'un cas marginal: Christine de Pizan, traductrice de Thomas d'Aquin', in *Pratiques de la culture écrite en France au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle: Actes du Colloque international du CNRS, Paris, 16-18 mai 1992, organisé en l'honneur de Gilbert Ouy par l'Unité de recherche 'Culture écrite du Moyen Age tardif'*, ed. by Monique Ornato and Nicole Pons, Textes et études du Moyen Age, 2 (Louvain-la-neuve: FIDEM, 1995), pp. 161-78.

<sup>4</sup> While *sapience* is reached by one's own intellect, *sagece* combines all qualities that can

Let us first take a look at the field of theory. Human beings have an intellect which they need for getting insight into the 'higher things'. They also have a natural need to learn because their intellect is not yet perfect. According to Aristotle, man tends towards a perfection from which he is separated during his life on earth. Acquaintance through knowledge brings him closer to this perfection. Christian scholars like Aquinas understood this as concerned with a vision of God once one's earthly life was finished. Man comes closer to God by dedicating his life to the study of theology. But first of all he needs to have this gift of intellect and to make use of it in a goal-directed way, as Christine shows by the example of Charles V:

Or regardons la subtillece de l'entendement de nostre prince, comment grandement s'estendi à comprendre et concevoir toutes choses, tant speculatives, comme ouvrables, lorsque les belles sciences estudioit, desquelles les termes savoit plainement rapporter ez assemblées et congregacions des sages maistres et philosophes, parler de toutes choses si bien et si parfondemment que nul ne le passoit, et c'est chose manifeste, sceue et prouvée par gens digne de foy, qui ce tesmoignent. (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 5)

[Now, consider the subtlety of our prince's intelligence, and how broadly extended it was in embracing all things, both abstract and practical, when he studied the noble sciences. He knew all their terms of art, and used them amply in the assemblies and meetings of wise masters and philosophers. He spoke so well and profoundly on all matters that no one surpassed him, as is well known, and attested to by worthy and faithful folk.]

*Entendement* does not only stand for the possession of an intelligent mind, but also for its goal-directed use. Charles V orients his studies to the goal of greatest possible knowledge and arranges his court accordingly.

It is also the use of the intellect that, following Aristotle, distinguishes the ruler from those he rules over. The wise rule over the rest like the soul over the body. This thought is based on the idea of the mind as having the power to control the human body. It is true that the body carries out the vital activities, but it is directed by the soul. Giles of Rome interprets this as meaning that the king's rule over his subjects must reflect the superiority of his wisdom:

comme à l'un affiere estre roy, duquel l'estat soit souverain sur tous autres, aussi c'est juste chose, ainsi que recite Gilles en son Livre des Princes, que il soit plus sage et plus pourveu que nul de ses subgiez. (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 62).

[as it is proper that one should be king, and his place should be as sovereign over all others. So Giles, in his *Government of Princes*, declares that he must be wiser and more prepared than any of his subjects.]

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lead to this point and beyond, including its practical realization (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 2).

<sup>5</sup> *Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 2. See also St Thomas Aquinas, *In Metaphys.*, I. 1. 34.

Due to his special gift of intellect, the king, more than his people, is able to recognize the goal of human existence. Yet in St Thomas's commentary on the *Metaphysics* the difference between classical and Christian understanding of princely rule is made clear. In Christianity, the vision of God is the ultimate goal of all human effort. The king, as he is the vicar of God and thus part of the divine hierarchy, possesses a better capacity to recognize good, and is able to lead his people to their destination in heaven. From this circumstance the demand on the king to perfect his own wisdom by striving for knowledge follows inevitably. The reasons which keep man from striving for knowledge elicit an admonition and request to self-examination: laziness, reluctance, and overexertion make learning more difficult. Other preoccupations like addiction to various pleasures keep him away from his studies. Finally, mental or physical defects like imbecility, deafness, or blindness make learning impossible for him.

However, as soon as he faces the challenge and seeks knowledge (*scientia*), he will escape his state of an 'amazed being' (*philomites*) and will become a philosopher.<sup>6</sup> Using his intellect leads man to *science* and *sapience*. While *science* marks acquaintance through knowledge in general (i.e. knowledge in the seven liberal arts, and astrology and philosophy), *sapience* means insight into the higher things; the prince, after all, must struggle to deserve nobility of heart and a good reputation:

Et que nostre roy Charles fust vray philosophe, c'est assavoir, ameur de sapience, meismes imbuez en ycelle, appert par ce qu'il fu vray inquisiteur des hautes choses premieraines, c'est assavoir de haulte theologie, qui est le terme de sapience, qui n'est

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<sup>6</sup> Inspired by Aristotle, St Thomas held that amazement was the source of the works of the *poetae*, who could not explain the things they observed and therefore transformed them into myths. These myths are, in the end, to be dismissed as lies. Science on the other hand looks for the deeper reasons of things, and brings truth to light. Therefore the writings of the scientists must be preferred to those of the poets. In her translation, Christine does not comment on this; but she soon does turn to the poets, again toning down St Thomas's arguments. It is true that the poets did not tell the truth in their stories, but their writings contain a hidden sense, which is revealed to every understanding reader: 'si est assavoir que comme en general le nom de poesie soit pris pour fiction quelconques, c'est-à-dire pour toute narracion ou introduction apparaument signifiant un senz, et occultement en segnefie un aultre ou plusieurs, combien que plus proprement dire celle soit poesie, dont la fin est verité, et le procès doctrine revestue en paroles d'ornemens delictables et par propres couleurs, lesquelz revestemens soient d'estranges guises au propos dont on veult, et les couleurs selon propres figures' (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 68). [Note that in general the name poetry is used for any fiction at all; that is, for any narration or presentation that gives one apparent meaning, but gives also one or more concealed meanings. It would be more accurate, however, to call poetry whatever has truth as its end, but has its didactic purpose clothed in agreeable flourishes and various rhetorical colours, with all these strange vestments nevertheless fitting the intended messages, and the colours matched to the substance.] I forgo here any longer discussion of the origin of myth, as well as the history of hermeneutics in the Middle Ages.



aultre chose que cognoistre Dieu et ses hautes vertus celestes, par naturele science.  
(*Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 3)

[And that our King Charles was a true philosopher, which is to say a lover of wisdom, deeply imbued with it, is apparent from his being a true seeker of highest principles, or high theology, which is the end of wisdom: to know God and his heavenly qualities, by means of natural reason.]

By the vision of God through theology, Christine defines the goal the king must devote himself to. This demand is not imposed for his own salvation which after all does not depend on the search after God by scientific means, but solely on faith. It is rather that the king stands in the role of the political and theological ruler. It was the very problem of the occidental schism that already demanded the French king's theological competence, because as the vicar of God his decision was needed and listened to.

After knowledge, as theoretical acquaintance with truth, comes its use in the practice of *art* and *prudence*. Man acts in accordance with what he has learned in theory. Yet once again we have to distinguish two forms of acting: acting directed outwards by the arts, and 'inner' acting by prudence. In the arts, knowledge of the seven liberal arts (*septem artes liberales*) as well as of the mechanic arts (*artes mechanicae*) is applied:

mais, pour un petit differer, selon l'ordre que Aristote met des vertus comprises en sagece par particularitez distintées, comme cy devant est dit, dirons d'art, en prouvant nostre sage roy Charles estre grant artiste, soit es .vii. sciences liberales, ou es causes ouvrables. (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 11)

[but to turn for a moment to another category in Aristotle's setting out of the virtues that constitute wisdom, as discussed above, let us now speak of *art*, and show our wise King Charles to be a great artist, whether in the seven liberal arts or in practical affairs.]

By means of her translation of Aquinas's commentary, Christine underlines the relevance of its content for the king's conduct of life and office. It is not enough for him simply to have a high degree of education. As I have mentioned before, he rather needs to apply his knowledge for good government, because practice is more important than theory. Aristotle's comparison, quoted at length in translation by Christine, of the artist or practitioner (*artiste*), who puts learning into action through arts, and the *expert* who may know how things work, but who has never been in touch with them, might explain this difference:

En tant que l'artiste est reputez plus sage de l'expert qu'il cognoist mieulx les raisons pour quoy il convient qu'il soit ainsi, et l'expert sens plus ne cognoit aultres causes, ne mès il est ainsi, car il est assavoir, (ce dist-il), que l'art ou la *science est ditte principal*, laquelle a plus principal operacion. [...] comme le principal maistre soit cellui, qui use de la chose, si comme l'arbalestier de l'arbaleste ou le marinier de la nef, en tant qu'il scet à quoy la chose est faite plus que cil qui ouvroit, [...] si s'ensuit que les

architecteurs, c'est assavoir les disposeurs de l'œuvre, scevent les causes des besoignes, et que on les doit reputer les plus sages. (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 11)

[The artist is thought wiser than the expert because of his knowledge of the reasons behind things being as they are, while the expert knows none of that, but only that things are thus. For (continues Aristotle) that is called the principal art whose role is most dominating. [...] as the principal master is the one who uses the thing, whether it be the bowman with his crossbow or the mariner with his ship, since he knows the purpose for which the thing is made, better than the man who made it, [...] so it is that the architects of the work (that is, its planners) know the purposes underlying its parts, and therefore must be accounted the most wise'.]

It therefore goes without saying that the ideal king is not only familiar with the liberal and mechanical arts, but also his knowledge is visible to the outside world. Christine is anxious to prove that Charles V had put his theoretical knowledge into practice. She mentions various practical projects commissioned by the king, as well as his effort to obtain translations of Latin texts into French:<sup>7</sup>

pour la grant amour qu'il avoit à ses successeurs, que, au temps à venir, les vult pourveoir d'enseignemens et sciences introduisables à toutes vertus; dont, pour celle cause, fist par solempnelz maistres, souffisans en toutes les sciences et ars, translater de latin en françois tous les plus notables livres. (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 12)<sup>8</sup>

[his great love for his successors impelled him to provide for them lessons and knowledge conducive to virtue; for which reason he caused the most important works to be translated from Latin into French, by the most venerated masters, knowledgeable in all the sciences and the arts.]

The practical realization of his education is expressed not least by the king's active cooperation with the University of Paris. He listened to the advice of its scholars, especially regarding theological questions; and there is no doubt they had significant influence on his politics.<sup>9</sup>

### *Aristotelian Prudence as Charles V's Pattern of Conduct*

Besides action in the arts, derived from theoretical knowledge and visible to the outside world, there is another way of acting, less visible, which is expressed through caution and circumspection and which Christine calls *prudence*. Prudence is

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<sup>7</sup> For a list of such projects initiated by Charles V, see *Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 11.

<sup>8</sup> What follows is a listing of various translations, of which I only want to mention St Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Politics* (by Nicole Oresme), as well as the famous works of Vegetius, Valerius Maximus, and John of Salisbury. Christine's list largely coincides with those works she usually consulted herself.

<sup>9</sup> *Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 13; III. 53.

a way of conduct in which the consequences of one's own actions are always closely scrutinized:

Prudence doncques et art, ce dit Aristote, sont es parties de l'ame, là où advient pratique, qui apertient aux choses ouvrables, car, comme prudence par memoire des choses passées porvoie aux futures, car, selon Tulle ou .II<sup>e</sup>. des siennes Rethoriques, «les parties d'elle sont mises: memoire, intelligence et pourveance». (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 6)

[So prudence and art, says Aristotle, are proper to those parts of the soul from which come practice, which has to do with action. Prudence provides for future events by its memory of things past; as Tully says in the second *Rhetoric*: 'its parts are memory, intellect, and foresight'.]

This citation of Cicero shows that after Aristotle the idea of *prudence* had above all been discussed by the Stoics. However, their definition was interpreted in quite different ways throughout the Late Middle Ages. In *Reason and Society in the Middle Ages*, Alexander Murray distinguishes two different meanings of this notion.<sup>10</sup> The first was developed by the scholastics. They saw *prudence* as a virtue to help distinguish aids and obstacles in one's search for the love of God; so this *prudence* was a 'Christian prudence'. The second meaning lies in a sort of 'wise foresight' and prudence at the same time, which in our context the wise ruler applied for the sake of his state and people. Because of his function as mediator between the people and God, both definitions apply to the king of France.

### *Lawmaking and Politics of the King in Everyday Life*

Christine is concerned to apply the notion of *prudence* to the relations between the king and his subjects. One might ask how the king of France is to adapt his government to the interior (his own realm) and to the exterior (other realms and the papacy), beyond the moral norms he is naturally committed to by the virtues Christine has described in Part I. The goal of prudent action is always the well-being of the community of the kingdom. It is the king's duty to strive for it on several levels: lawmaking, economy, as well as the politics inside and outside the kingdom. Christine discusses these points on the basis of Aristotle's *Politics* as it is rendered in Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum*.<sup>11</sup> Aristotle's description of the ideal state,

<sup>10</sup> Alexander Murray, *Reason and Society in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 132–37. However, regarding Christine's understanding of *prudence*, Murray only talks about the category of worldly prudence. See *Reason and Society*, p. 135.

<sup>11</sup> Christine cites Giles of Rome in the French translation made by Henri de Gauchi. See Giles of Rome [Aegidius Romanus], *De regimine principum libri III*, ed. by Hieronymus Samaritanus (Rome, 1607; repr. Aalen: Scientia, 1967), II. 3. 32–35 and *Li Livres du gouvernement des rois: A XIIIth Century French Version of Egidio Colonna's Treatise De*

in which he explains the respective tasks of the prince and his people, forms the background for Christine's description of the prudent king. Everything she writes about good lawmaking, promotion of economy, love for the people and adequate foreign policy provides guidelines for a future king of France, illustrated by the example of Charles V, but based on Aristotle.

Let us first take a look at the king's lawmaking: as an example, Christine takes Charles's law on the regulation of the succession to the French throne, in which the full legal age of French kings was fixed at fourteen years. This law was meant to avoid the kingdom's stability being endangered by excessively long regencies by guardians of the king during his minority. Christine's point is not to argue concerning any succession regulation, but rather to show how and on what foundation the king shall carry out his legislation. She shows that Charles saw the common good as his supreme goal:

et vould de saine memoire et entencion delibérée, pour le bien de la couronne de France de la commune utilité, establir certaines loys] (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 6)

[he wished, while sound in memory, and with deliberate intent, to establish certain laws for the good of the French crown and the common weal.]

Change in the regulation of succession is represented as a useful adjustment of the existing legal order, that serves the common good. Its discussion is also an occasion to reflect on the general rationale for changing laws. According to Aristotle, changes in the law make sense if the new laws replace outmoded or bad laws or if they improve existing ones. However, they must correspond to natural law, i.e. the nature-given rules of humans living together. At the same time, Christine emphasizes that the ruler is bound to traditional law and must not change it if it does not serve the common good:

Or convient respondre à la demande devant ditte, se c'est proffit de muer les lois, et dirons que se les loys humaines et escriptes sont justes et droiturieres, *fondées sont sus* la loy de Nature [...]. Pour ce, en conclusion, les roys et princes doivent tenir les loys ancienes de leur terre, sanz les abatre, se contraires ne sont à la loy de nature, mès par bon esgart et aut profit du bien commun adjouster y peut on. (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 6; italics added)

[Now to respond to the question posed above, whether it is worthwhile to change laws. Let us say that if customary and written laws are just and righteous, this is because they are founded upon the natural law [...]. This is why, in conclusion, kings and princes must uphold the established laws of their land, without abolishing them, so long as they are not contrary to the law of Nature; but they may amend them—judiciously, and where it is for the common good.]

Besides his duty to maintain the legal order, the king has various other obligations by which he actively contributes to the functioning of the 'body politic'.<sup>12</sup> These may concern economic problems like the supply of the city of Paris with sufficient goods, the promotion of trade, and even the project of a channel between the Seine and Loire rivers, which however Charles V never completed.<sup>13</sup> Last but not least, the king must take care of political balance inside his kingdom. This is managed by letting his subjects share his political power through regular assemblies of the estates:

quant venoit à conseillier sus l'estat du royaume, il appelloit à son conseil les bourgeois de ses bonnes villes, et meismement des moyenes gens, et de celz du commun, affin qu'il leur moustrast la fiance qu'il avoit en eulx, quant par leur conseil vouloit ordener. (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, v. 8)

[whenever he wanted to take counsel concerning affairs of the kingdom, he called to his council the burghers of his good towns, and likewise citizens of middle rank, and the common people, in order to show the trust he had in them, because he wished to govern with their advice.]

Yet one cannot ignore the fact that in Christine's political theory, the king is the undisputed head of the state, and that he therefore carries the greatest burden of responsibility, of which, as a *prudent* king, he is obviously aware. Chapters 14 to 32 form a collection of sayings of Charles V, commented on and glossed (one is tempted to compare them to the Proverbs of King Solomon), in which Christine presents to her reader a random assortment of examples of the king's prudence, in the guise of instructions to direct the conduct for her reader. Charles's prudence is illustrated in his relation to scholars, his role as judge, or the relation to his court people. In order to give an example of how Christine proceeds, I shall cite just one example from Chapter 25. The anecdote shows Charles V as a fair and wise judge who is capable of seeing through even the most complicated case, judging it and reaching a just decision.<sup>14</sup> One of Charles's court officers made a journey to Rhodes with his rather spoilt son. Before the trip he had handed over his fortune to a trustee with strict orders not to pay back the money to anybody else than himself upon his return. His son, however, planned an intrigue by counterfeiting a letter that claimed his father had become a prisoner and needed to be ransomed. At the same time he

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<sup>12</sup> On this occasion, Christine cites Aristotle's definition of the city in his *Politics*. This passage corresponds almost word for word with Henri de Gauchi's translation of *De regimine principum*.

<sup>13</sup> See *Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 7. It seems that Charles VI has not taken up his father's project although it would have had a huge impact on France's economic wealth. It is possible that Christine, aware of the country's real problems, tries to direct the prince's attention to it once again.

<sup>14</sup> We can find a similar example in Chapter 38. The judicial function of the king was already mentioned in Christine's discussion about the virtue of justice in Part I.

made his father sign an authorization for the trustee, which he said was needed for another business. In this way the son managed of course to make the trustee pay him his father's entire fortune. This case reached the king, who punished the fraudulent son with the full force of the law. But surprisingly Charles also punished the trustee and the father, because they had acted unreasonably: the trustee had broken a valid contract and the father was responsible for the bad character of his son, so that he should not have trusted him as he did.<sup>15</sup>

What contribution does Christine's detailed account of this case make to our understanding of the king's prudence? Charles's role in this story is that of the judge. His means of reaching a judgement gives evidence of a discriminating view of the case and of the persons involved. The son was sentenced because of his fraud. The trustee had to do without the money because of his disregard of his contractual duties. Finally the father was guilty of insufficient moral education of his son. Thus the king regarded the persons involved under completely different aspects. The son and the trustee were sentenced by public law—the first one as a criminal. The father, however, only offended against a moral norm, but was sentenced anyway. This differentiated judgement by the king, a judgement following moral and legal criteria, marks the effect of *prudence* on justice that Christine wants to show her princely reader, whose duty it is to act in the same way, and to be a prudent judge and lawmaker.

### *Prudence in Foreign Policy: Emperor Charles IV's Visit to Paris*

Prudent conduct always consciously reflects one's own options, as can also be seen in Charles V's foreign policy. In Chapters 33 to 52 Christine relates, entirely based on the *Grandes chroniques de France*, and without making essential changes to the original, the visit of the Emperor Charles IV to Paris, as well as the beginning of the great occidental schism including the French king's reaction. Why does Christine give over so much space in her mirror-*cum*-biography to these events? Our impression is that especially these crucial events had a big influence on the following generation. Not only do they illustrate Charles's political conduct, they even represent his political heritage (both the visit and the beginning of the schism take place in 1378, two years before the king's death). On the one hand, they serve to demonstrate the wise and prudent conduct of the ideal king on a larger political scale, i.e. in his relationship with other dynasties and the church. But on the other hand, just because the account corresponds closely to the *Grandes chroniques*, we can assume a great interest of our author in these events, which point directly (in the case of the schism) or indirectly (in the discussion about the war with England during Emperor Charles IV's visit) to contemporary unsolved problems, which a

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<sup>15</sup> See *Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 25.

future king would have to face. Let us first take a look at the account of Charles IV's visit to France.

For Christine, the emperor's entire visit is a highly remarkable matter which underlines once again the greatness and wisdom of her king. Our author explains her detailed rendering of the chronicle's account:

et pour ce que la venue de cest Empereur dessus dit fut chose moult notable, l'ay mis plus long, et encore pour traittier ma matiere en brief l'ay abrigié plus que les croniques et la relacion de ceulz qui y furent ne le declairent, et nonobstant que à ceulz qui encore vivent, qui ceste ditte venue virent et aussi maintes autres choses en ce livre dites, ne leur seront par aventure à ouir si plaisans parce que ilz le scevent, mais, comme dit Ovide en la fin de son livre Methamorphoseos: 'Je ay fait une œuvre, laquelle par feu ne fer ne peut estre destruite' [...] la matiere, est bien drois que pour belle legende et exemplaire nottoire aux princes à venir soit enregistrée chose, laquelle si notablement et grandement ne pourroit avoir esté menée par tel ordre en toutes choses, sanz en nulle avoir queconques faulte, se grant poissance, grant senz et grant prudence de prince ne l'eust gouvernée; [...] (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 49)

[the visit of the emperor being a most important event, I have treated of it at length; but I have still had to keep my account shorter than those of others, who were present. For eye-witnesses to this visit and to many other events discussed in this book, these things must perhaps not be pleasant to read about, because they know them already. But as Ovid says at the end of his *Metamorphoses*, 'I have made a work whose contents can never be deleted, neither by fire nor iron' [...] It is well that such a fine story and example for future princes as the emperor's visit be committed to writing, because never could such a grand and momentous thing have come about, with such harmony and without the slightest imperfection, if it had not been arranged by so commanding, so intelligent, and so farsighted a prince.]

Christine is not so much interested in preserving the memory of this considerable event, and the king's wisdom expressed during it for posterity: once again she prefers to pursue didactic goals, using her source as illustrative material for instruction in 'prudence'. She does not seek to remind the reader of the king's greatest achievements, but she idealizes his conduct in comparison to the most important sovereigns of history:

que peut-on plus dire de la magnificence du riche roy Assuaire es nobles assemblées de barons? Que peut plus estre dit de l'ordre de vivre du sage Salemon? Que peut plus estre notté la largece de Alixandre? Que peut-on plus dire de la belle pollicie des Rommains? A non Dieu! Il me semble que le bel stille de vie de cestui sage roy se peut bien à yceulz et à tous autres renommez bon assimiler; (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 49)

[what more could be said of the mighty King Xerxes, with his noble entourage of knights? What more, of the way Solomon the Wise conducted his life? What is more remarkable in the largesse of Alexander, or in the superior polity of the Romans? No, by God! It seems to me that the high style of our own wise king can readily hold its own when compared to these, and to any other famous exemplars;]

In the account of the visit, Charles V impresses the reader as an exemplary guardian of his kingdom's sovereignty and interests. As we shall see, it imparts a variety of messages to the reader that go beyond the simple facts of a meeting between two monarchs. Charles IV of Luxembourg was the uncle of Charles V, who was the son of the emperor's sister Bonne and King John the Good. The journey of the emperor, who was severely sick with gout, had three motives: a family one, because he wanted to see his sister and nephew again; a political one, because matters between France and the Empire, as well as the war with England, could be discussed; and finally a religious one, the emperor's pilgrimage to Saint Maur.

The account of the visit impresses through a dense national symbolism and the emphasis on the kingdom's 'national' sovereignty, which can already be found in the *Grandes chroniques* and which Christine takes up. Already we are told that the arrival of Charles IV has been in accord with defined rules, e.g. the existence of territorial rights which the emperor had to respect. For example the imperial Christmas ceremony was held near the border with France in the city of Cambrai which was still within the confines of the Empire. It is expressly mentioned that the emperor was not permitted to carry out this rite in French territory:

A Cambray, qui est cité de l'Empire, celebra la feste de Noel, et là fist ses serimonies imperiaulx, selon l'usage, ce qu'il n'eust mie fait ou royaume de France. (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 33)

[At Cambrai, a city of the Empire, he celebrated Christmas, and performed rites according to imperial usage—which he could not have done at all within the kingdom of France.]

The emphasis on the French territorial rights and its 'national' symbols becomes particularly clear in Chapter 35. When the emperor arrived at the gates of the city of Paris, he was given a richly decorated horse, showing the coat of arms of France (*à moult bel harnois aux armes de France*). Contrary to all customs the emperor was used to, this horse was a black one. The author of the account does not forget to add an explanation of this remarkable detail:

A La Chappelle descendi l'Empereur et fu montez sur le destrier que le roy lui avoit envoié, le quel estoit morel et semblablement fu montez son filz; et ne fu mie sanz avis envoié de cellui poil, car les empereurs, de leur droit, quant ilz entrent es bonnes villes de leur seigneurie et de l'Empire, ont acoustumé estre sus chevaux blans, si ne vout le roy qu'en son royaume le feist, affin qu'il n'y peust estre notté aucun signe de dominacion. (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 35)

[At La Chappelle the emperor descended from his palanquin and mounted the steed sent to him by the king: a black horse, and his son was given a similar one. The king had sent mounts of such a colour quite knowingly, for emperors always rode white horses as of right, when they entered the good towns of their own domain and of the Empire. But the king, with a view to avoiding any appearance of overlordship, did not wish this to be done in his kingdom.]



There is no other point in our text where the sovereignty of the kingdom is as clearly displayed as here. In France only the French king rides a white horse. By accepting the black horse, the emperor not only signals that he accepts the sovereignty of France, but he subordinates himself as a guest to the rights of the king and does not insist on his own imperial rights.

The king himself faces his guest dressed in solemn garments, in accordance with the dignity of his office:

Adonc, de son palays se parti le roy, monté sur un grant palefroy blanc, aux armes de France richement abillé (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 36)

[So the king quit his palace, mounted on a tall white palfrey richly caparisoned in the arms of France]

We can then find another example of the symbolism of ‘national’ sovereignty in the description of the order of seats during the banquet of the celebration of Epiphany in Chapter 41:

et après sist l’Empereur, puis le roy, puis le roy de Bahagne, et avoit autant de distance du roy à lui comme du roy à l’Empereur, (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 41)

[and then came the emperor, then the king, then the king of Bohemia; and there was as much distance between him and our king as between our king and the emperor]

The king is seated at an equal distance between the emperor and the emperor’s son. Thus he sits exactly between his two most important guests. The central political figure of the kingdom is also in the centre of the community at table.

These examples may be sufficient to show that the text does not simply relate a meeting between two important historical characters of the Middle Ages, but locates France and its king in a system of political norms. This is probably what makes it so interesting for Christine. The dignity of office is emphasized once again and reinforces the importance of prudent action, which is in the further course of the account again exemplified through the conduct of Charles V. He evidently profited from the visit of his uncle to further engage the Empire into an alliance with France against England: the way the king argues against England in the account of the *Chroniques* fits with Christine’s concerns. Excellent rhetorical capabilities are ascribed to him:

Adonc le sage roy, qui en son entendement avoit science et rethorique souveraine en language, commença son parler par une preambule si belle et si nottable que grant beauté estoit à ouïr, (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 43)

[The wise king, whose understanding encompassed all of the science of rhetoric and speaking, began his address with so fine and remarkable a preamble that it was a delight to hear]

Charles V goes on to explain the rights of the French crown from the beginnings of France to the present time. He justifies his claims against England by appeal to the results of examinations made by jurists at the most notable universities: Bologna, Montpellier, Toulouse, Orleans, and Rome. Their arguments must have been of some value for the humanistically educated Emperor Charles IV. In any case they were enough to provoke at least a benevolent reaction:

si vouloit que tous sceussent que lui, son filz le roy des Romains, ses autres enfens, et touz ses parens, aliez et amis, et toute sa poissance il vouloit et offroit au roy estre tous siens contre toutes personnes, à aidier et garder son bien, honneur et royaume et de ses enfens, freres et amis (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 44)

[he wished that everyone should know that he, his son the king of the Romans, his other children, and all of his relatives, allies, and friends, and all his power should be at the king's disposal against all comers—in the defence of his estate, his honour, his kingdom, and his children, brothers, and friends]

### *Charles V and the Occidental Schism—the Limits of Prudence*

The second significant event of the last years of Charles V's reign and life was the beginning of the great occidental schism. The king himself, as we may say from several hundred years' distance, played a rather unfortunate role in the case, because he had a part in enabling the division of the Church through his recognition of the Avignonese as the only legal papacy. Therefore Christine's efforts concentrate on presenting the king once again as a careful judge, who weighs the pros and cons before taking a decision, so that his final judgement is without any alternative. At the same time she acknowledges the burden of the schism for the Christian world, and the problematic entrained by the decision finally taken by her king in 1378.<sup>16</sup>

The tale of the schism begins with the account of Pope Gregory XI's death on 27 March 1378. The election in Rome of Urban VI on 4 April of the same year happened in a city shaken by turmoil. Since the people vehemently demanded the election of an Italian, the cardinals found themselves under considerable pressure, and installed the Italian Urban IV. But after the election, many of them quickly broke with the new pope, turned away from him, and went to the kingdom of Naples where they asked Urban to step down. Later in 1378, Robert of Geneva was elected, as Pope Clement VII. In the meantime, in Rome Urban VI had seized the opportunity to disenfranchise the disloyal cardinals by creating twenty-nine new cardinals.

In this situation the European dynasties, above all the king of France, were forced to side with one or another party. Christine relates that Charles V was informed

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<sup>16</sup> At the time of his death, Charles talks about the schism in his confession and asks God and his people for forgiveness (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 71).

about the ‘illegal’ election of Urban VI by some cardinals in August 1378. From this moment, the king had to decide in favour of either Urban or his opponent. And it is from this very point that the account of the *Chroniques* is for Christine once again an ideal source in order to illustrate the ‘right’ conduct of the king. Charles’s reaction was not to take hasty political steps, but, corresponding to his wisdom, to seek out competent advisers:

ne vould en aucune maniere y proceder de sa propre voullenté, mais toujours, en toutes choses, par deliberacion des plus sages; (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 53)

[in no wise did he wish to proceed of his own accord, but always, and in every matter, in consultation with the most wise counsellors]

The hearing of the cardinals is carried out before a body of legal and theological experts from several universities:

adonc le sage roy, pour avoir regart et advis bien au vray sur ceste choses, (manda) prelatz, arcevesques et evesques de son royaume, et tous les souverains clers, maistres en theologie et aultres docteurs pris es Universités de Paris, d’Orliens, d’Angiers et autre part, partout où il les pot sçavoir, et assembler les fist. (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 53)

[so the wise king, to obtain an opinion and to be well advised on these matters, called together prelates, archbishops and bishops of his kingdom, and all the most learned people: the doctors of theology and other disciplines from the universities of Paris, Orleans, Angers, and elsewhere—wherever he could find them—and assembled them.]

The conduct of the king is marked by a constant search for background information and special knowledge. He delays his decision and confesses his knowledge about the great significance of his responsibility (*car la matiere estoit moult haulte, perilleuse et douteuse*) [for the matter was most important, dangerous, and uncertain]. Only after intense discussions with his theologians does Charles V speak out for the recognition of Clement as pope and begin to look for allies among the European dynasties. Although this counter-election led to the split of the Church and of the high noble families, Christine maintains that this did not happen because of the conduct of the French king: it could not be prevented, in spite of Charles’s prudence. In other words, what the king can do for his kingdom through the virtue of prudence is limited by the lack of prudence of other elements of theological, political or military power. The tale of the schism illustrates both sides of the medal, and testifies to the great impact it had on the people’s minds:

O quel flayel! O quant dolooureux meschief, qui encore dure et a duré ja l’espace de XXVI ans, ne taillée n’est ceste pestillence de cesser [...] Car se n’est par voie d’aucune bateure, je ay grant paour que ne soions pas chastiez, car semble que n’ayons aucune memoire des Dieu vengeancees, et Dieu par sa sainte clemence y vueille piteusement pourveoir! (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 61)

[What a scourge! O what a grievous catastrophe weighs on us, and has weighed on us for twenty-six years! And this pestilence seems no closer to an end [...] For unless by means of some terrible beating, I fear we will not change our ways, for it seems to me we have forgotten the power of divine retribution. May God by his holy clemency treat us mercifully!]

As we have seen before, Charles himself was not without responsibility for the split in the Church, but Christine does not let him appear as an imprudent king. She even lets him recognize the evil of the schism. Her account ends with the claim that the king already planned a Church council that would vote for a new pope after the resignation of the existing ones. By that she underlines that Charles did not just plead the cause of his kingdom, but pursued the well-being of Christianity as a whole (*desirant le bien et la paix universelle de crestienté*).<sup>17</sup> Christine's account of the schism thus proves the king's *prudence* by attributing to him correct action during this tragic conflict.<sup>18</sup> For our author, Charles's skills during the conflict with England, his relation to the Empire, and his reaction to the schism are central problems of French politics that her contemporaries had to face, also. There was bitter fighting for power taking place around the embattled King Charles VI (the son of Charles V), who suffered from recurring attacks of insanity. The main participants in this conflict were Louis of Orleans (the king's brother) and Philip of Burgundy (and Philip's son, John the Fearless, after his father's death), the king's uncle. In this context, Christine's emphasis on *prudence* appears as a clear admonition to the princes to reconsider their own action and to bear in mind the higher interests of the kingdom. As Christine's reader knows, there is a price to pay for being imprudent, and there is a reward to gain for being prudent and carrying out one's God-given tasks. France's princes ought not let their accumulated knowledge take second place to pursuit of their own interests, but act wisely and prudently. Unfortunately it is also true that history proved that all of Christine's efforts were useless, and that she did not succeed in convincing her readers of the importance of her admonition. France had therefore to go through a long period of chaos, war, and destruction.

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<sup>17</sup> *Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 61.

<sup>18</sup> We may remark that Christine knows how to use Charles V's death for hypothetical statements. Her suggestion that he made efforts towards an end of the schism (only stopped by his own death) amounts to a relatively safe claim. During the schism, the conciliar movement was always actively seeking a solution, and the support of the Avignonese pope did not exist during the whole time of the schism. As Christine tells it, Charles V pursued his plans for a council under the influence of the University of Paris, showing once again his nearness to the Parisian theologians and jurists. It is a remarkable fact that it was Jean Gerson, the representative of the University of Paris (and Christine's friend), who later had a decisive part in ending the schism during the Council of Constance.

# On Translating Christine as a Philosopher\*

KAREN GREEN

Undertaking the project of translating Christine de Pizan's *Livre de paix* as part of a project to better understand her political thought, I was struck by certain difficulties following from the practice of translating her word '*prudence*' in the homophonic and obvious manner as 'prudence'. At one level there can be nothing wrong with this practice. '*Prudence*' is the name Christine uses for the first of the four cardinal virtues, and this is generally translated as 'prudence'. Yet the current English word has quite the wrong philosophical resonance for capturing her thought. 'Prudence' in current English means something like, intelligent self-interest, and there is a strong tendency to contrast prudence with morality. Indeed, since the time of Hobbes, a good deal of philosophical discussion has focused on the question of whether Hobbes is correct in deeming morality to be merely prudence, that is enlightened self-interest, or whether something further is required of the moral person.<sup>1</sup> We consider the person who saves for their old age prudent, but not necessarily moral. The person who walks away when they see another being attacked by a gang may also be prudent, but clearly falls short on moral virtue.

In Christine's work by contrast, prudence takes centre stage as fundamental to virtue, and in many cases her political thought begins with a meditation on prudence. The *Epistre Othea*, her earliest political work, begins with Othea introducing herself

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\* I am greatly indebted to Fiona Leigh and Constant J. Mews, without whose helpful erudition, in the first case in relation to Aristotle and the Stoics, in the second in relation to twelfth-century authors, this paper would not have taken its current form.

<sup>1</sup> An influential modern discussion of these matters is David Gauthier's 'Morality and Advantage' which first appeared in *The Philosophical Review*, 76 (1967), 460–75.

as ‘deesse de prudence’ [goddess of prudence].<sup>2</sup> Christine explains that she is to be thought of as an allegorical figure representing this virtue: ‘par Othea nous prendrons la virtue de prudence et sagece’ [Othea we take to be the virtue of prudence and wisdom].<sup>3</sup> Her somewhat later *Livre de prod’homme de l’homme* also exists in a slightly revised version as the *Livre de prudence*. It is a mirror of princes grounded in prudence, which glosses texts taken from Martin of Braga’s *De quattuor virtutibus*, [commonly attributed to Seneca].<sup>4</sup> The *Livre des trois vertus*, a mirror for princesses, is also largely an account of the way in which a princess or high lady should be governed by prudence.<sup>5</sup> And while prudence plays a slightly less prominent role in the *Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V* and in the *Livre du corps de policie*, in the *Livre de paix* it returns as the major theme of the first book, which Christine says is written ‘a l’ennortement de continuation de paix à mondit seigneur de Guienne sus la vertu de prudence et de ce que elle requiert en gouvernement de prince’ [to exhort my said lord of Guyenne to the continuation of peace under [the guidance of] the virtue of prudence and what it requires of princely government].<sup>6</sup> In Chapter 5 of this last book Christine provides us with her fullest account of the nature of prudence.

While the initial purpose of this paper was to head off the misunderstandings of Christine’s philosophy that might derive from the modern connotations of the word ‘prudence’, the examination of Christine’s use of this term has turned out to have wider benefits. For it has helped clarify the tradition within which Christine was writing, and shown how her usage evolved, as well as cast new light on the question of her knowledge of Aristotle’s texts. Indeed the discussion of prudence in the *Livre de paix* indicates that in the twelve years during which she wrote serious political works, Christine had significantly extended her acquaintance with the classical philosophical corpus. By this means she had acquired a deeper appreciation of the classical origins of her term ‘prudence’ than can be found in her earlier writing. But

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<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the political import of this text see Sandra Hindman, *Christine de Pizan’s ‘Épître Othea’. Painting and Politics at the Court of Charles VI* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1986).

<sup>3</sup> *Othea*, pp. 199–200; Christine de Pizan, *Christine de Pizan’s Letter of Othea to Hector*, trans. by Jane Chance (Newburyport, MA: Focus Information Group, 1990), pp. 35–36.

<sup>4</sup> In writing this paper I have been able to consult a transcription of the *Livre de prudence* kindly provided by the late Eric Hicks, for which I am most grateful. For a discussion of the relationship between the *Livre de prudence* and *Livre de la prod’homme de l’homme* see Christine M. Reno, ‘Le Livre de Prudence/Livre de la Prod’homme de l’homme: Nouvelles Perspectives’, in *Une femme de lettres au moyen âge, études autour de Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Liliane Dulac and Bernard Ribémont (Orleans: Paradigme, 1995), pp. 23–38.

<sup>5</sup> *Trois vertus*, I. 10–26, pp. 41–120; Christine de Pizan, *The Treasure of the City of Ladies*, trans. by Sarah Lawson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), pp. 55–105.

<sup>6</sup> *Paix*, I, p. 57.

even in reading her earlier works it is important not to be led astray in the interpretation of Christine by following the modern connotations of this term.

That there is a temptation to succumb to a potentially misleading or anachronistic reading of 'prudence' is suggested by comments on Christine's use of the term by Charity Cannon Willard and Kate Forhan. In her very useful recent book, *The Political Theory of Christine de Pizan* Forhan recognizes that Christine does not mean by 'prudence' 'pusillanimous caution', and that 'prudence' is the French translation of the Latin *prudentia*—in its turn Cicero's translation of the Greek *phronesis*.<sup>7</sup> While commenting on the 'rich significance' of the term, she reads into Christine's political theory connotations of the word which have come to dominate modern usage. While these connotations already attached to some uses of the Greek word '*phronesis*', they were alien to the central philosophical use to be found in Aristotle and inherited by Christine.<sup>8</sup> Forhan argues that: 'Christine de Pizan's desperate and ultimately futile effort to save the French monarchy causes her to conflate all the other virtues of the tradition—whether liberality, generosity and glory of the Roman tradition or the cardinal virtues of the Greco-Christian tradition—into one, the pragmatic self-interest that she calls prudence'.<sup>9</sup> She reinforces this idea by going on to say that Christine 'attempts to motivate the prince to consider pragmatic self-interest in governance'. She represents this as a shift away from the conventional political attitude of the Middle Ages, and although she does not say as much, if this outlook were to be found in Christine, one would have to admit that she had anticipated Hobbes's later flight away from the framework of Aristotelian and Ciceronian virtue ethics, which had dominated medieval political writing. I will argue, however, that it is a mistake to read back into Christine these modern connotations of 'prudence', and that ultimately her mature notion is very close to Aristotle's *phronesis* and cannot be equated with narrow self-interest. Indeed, there is something to be said for following modern translators of Aristotle's '*phronesis*' and using 'practical wisdom' to translate Christine's '*prudence*'. This is not, however, the path we have taken. Older English translations of Aristotle, such as Rackham's, in fact translate *phronesis* as 'prudence' and this choice has benefits, for it preserves the close links between the Greek '*phronesis*' and the Latin '*prudentia*'. It is only because of the misleading overtones of this translation that it has become more common for translators of Aristotle to use the phrase 'practical wisdom'. Yet this substitution is not a great help in understanding Aristotle, since in English

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<sup>7</sup> Kate L. Forhan, *The Political Theory of Christine de Pizan* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), p. 107.

<sup>8</sup> Aristotle says 'knowledge of one's own interest will certainly be one kind of prudence' and this has 'caused the word "prudent" to mean those who are wise in their own interest'. However, he does not himself subscribe to this narrow definition Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. by H. Rackham, *The Loeb Classical Library* (London: Heinemann, 1982), 1142a1–9.

<sup>9</sup> Forhan, *The Political Theory of Christine de Pizan*, p. 100.

‘practical wisdom’ has little colloquial sense other than, ‘whatever Aristotle meant by *phronesis*’. Conservatism is moreover suggested by the fact that ‘*prudence*’ is the term used for ‘*prudencia*’ in Nicole Oresme’s French translation of Aristotle’s *Ethics*.<sup>10</sup>

Given that it would be just as anachronistic to assume that the full Aristotelian connotations of the term *phronesis* had survived into the Middle Ages, as to read into Christine’s ‘prudence’ the modern connotations of the term, we have a further reason for retaining the translation ‘prudence’ while keeping in mind its Greek original. ‘Prudence’ had acquired its own set of contexts during the centuries that separated Aristotle and Christine. These had distanced it considerably from Aristotle’s original, though we will see that many medieval depictions of prudence do have Aristotelian origins. Taking off from features of Aristotle’s use, something like the modern connotations were sometimes associated with the term, and different authors had elaborated the relationship between prudence and the other virtues in a variety of ways. Added to this, there are hesitations and inconsistencies in Christine’s discussion of prudence which could be taken to show that she did not in fact have any clear philosophical concept in mind. Significant evidence of the shortcomings of Christine’s philosophical sources is to be uncovered by an examination of her earliest discussion of prudence, while her later work shows an increasingly deep familiarity with the original philosophical contexts in which the term had been used.

In the medieval period more mystically inclined writers, like Hugh of St-Victor, were using ‘*prudencia*’ to designate a more worldly wisdom than that associated with *sapientia*. In her discussion of de Pizan’s *Livre des trois vertus*, Charity Cannon Willard may have been influenced by this tradition. She says that the worldly prudence that Christine appeals to as a guide for women ‘is related to the concept of the active life’ that Christine defends at the beginning of her book as an acceptable way to demonstrate one’s charity or love of God.<sup>11</sup> She here seems to be attributing to Christine an acceptance of a clear distinction between a lesser worldly and active life, and a higher spiritual calling. Willard is quite correct to point out that in contrast to earlier ‘mirrors’, written by men for women’s edification, Christine’s book does not deal at length with spiritual matters, and the retreat to prayer. Rather, it offers the advice of worldly prudence which provides practical lessons and is ‘distinctly secular’.<sup>12</sup> But in characterizing the practical and active nature of Christine’s advice,

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<sup>10</sup> *Maistre Nicole Oresme: Le Livre de éthiques d’Aristote, Published from the Text of Ms 2902, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique* ed. by Albert D. Menut (New York: Stechart, 1940).

<sup>11</sup> Charity Cannon Willard, *Christine de Pisan: Her Life and Works* (New York: Persea, 1984), p. 145.

<sup>12</sup> *Trois vertus*, p. xii; Charity Cannon Willard, ‘The Manuscript Tradition of the *Livre des Trois Vertus* and Christine de Pisan’s Audience’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 27 (1966), 433–44, at p. 441. On this matter it is instructive to contrast Ysambert de Saint Léger’s sixteenth-century reworking of the early fifteenth-century *Le Miroir des dames* with Christine’s text (Lecce: Milella, 1978).



Willard evokes a contrast, to be found in works to which Christine in all likelihood had access, which there is reason to think Christine rejected.

Hugh of St-Victor, for instance, had distinguished wisdom, prudence, and sensibility along the lines indicated by Willard. In a pair of passages that together are reminiscent of Aristotelian claims that woman's reason is in some sense defective Hugh says: 'Wisdom is reasoning directed towards divine things, prudence is reasoning directed towards human things, and sensibility is affection or desire concerned with earthly things'. He then goes on to associate this with male and female difference. 'Man therefore is the image of wisdom, woman the form of prudence, but beasts the likeness of sensuality and concupiscence.'<sup>13</sup>

In referring to 'worldly prudence' (prudence mondaine) in *Le Livre des trois vertus* Christine might be thought to be subscribing to this tradition. But in fact there is evidence that she was implicitly rejecting it, or at least reforming it, when she cast Othea as a goddess who is the image of a prudence that applies in both the worldly and spiritual spheres. 'Mondaine' in Christine's phrase 'prudence mondaine' should be taken to modify 'prudence' rather than as suggesting that prudence is automatically worldly. Elsewhere Christine uses the phrase 'prudence divine' in a context which suggests that she is speaking of God's divine intelligence, and she thereby implies that prudence can be either worldly or divine.<sup>14</sup> In the prologue to the allegory attached to her introduction of Othea, Christine makes it clear that the ultimate reason for being adorned with the virtues is to meet one's final end, for life is itself a form of virtuous chivalry.<sup>15</sup> The prudence that Othea allegorizes is not therefore merely worldly. In fact it is highly probable that in making Othea goddess of both prudence and wisdom (*sagesse*), de Pizan was consciously rejecting the vein of medieval thought articulated so clearly by Hugh of St-Victor which saw the relationship between prudence and wisdom as hierarchical, mirroring that between the feminine realm of worldly and practical affairs and a masculine realm concerned with spiritual matters.<sup>16</sup>

We have good reason to believe that Christine was familiar with at least some of Hugh's works, and in particular with the book from which these passages are taken.

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<sup>13</sup> Hugh of St-Victor, *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith*, trans. by Roy Deferrari (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1951), pp. 152–53; PL 176: 315D–316A: 'Sapientia scilicet hoc est ratio ad divina, prudentia autem hoc est ratio ad humana; sensualitas vero hoc est affectus sive appetitus ad terrena. [...] Erat igitur vir imago sapientiae, femina forma prudentiae, bestia autem similitudo sensualitatis et concupiscentiae.'

<sup>14</sup> *Paix*, III, 14, p. 136.

<sup>15</sup> *Othea*, p. 201; *Letter of Othea to Hector*, pp. 37–38.

<sup>16</sup> Glynnis Cropp, in 'Philosophy, the Liberal Arts and Theology in *Le Livre de la mutation de Fortune* and *Le Livre de l'advison Cristine*' in this volume, shows that in her discussion of the liberal arts, Christine makes true philosophy, which includes both theoretical and practical branches, subservient to theology. This is structurally similar to the implication in *Othea* and *Le livre des trois vertus* that a practical, political life is one means of serving God.

She refers to his *Didascalicon* in the last passage of the *Epistre Othea* and to a book which she calls *L'Ame* in *Le Livre de l'advison Cristine*.<sup>17</sup> While it is often the case that Christine's citations are second hand, and the second of these quotations has been identified as being found in the *Manipulus florum* of Thomas of Ireland, the first has not been attributed to any secondary source and hence suggests a direct knowledge of Hugh's text.<sup>18</sup> It has also been plausibly suggested that Christine was relying on the very text in which we find Hugh's comments concerning prudence and wisdom for her account of the creation of woman in *Le Livre de la cité des dames*.<sup>19</sup> If this is so, the passage provides a notable example of Christine's tendency to modify her sources when she saw this as necessary in order to remove their misogynist overtones. There are subtle differences between Christine's account of the creation and Hugh's, which work to women's advantage. This indirectly supports the thought that when she introduced Othea as equally goddess of prudence and wisdom, Christine was resisting a tradition in which 'prudence' denotes a degraded or worldly kind of wisdom that should be associated with women.

In her partial reproduction of Hugh's text on the creation Christine elides those elements of her source that disadvantage women.<sup>20</sup> Hugh says that if woman had been made from man's head, she would seem to have been preferred to man. Had she been made from his feet she would have been subject to him like a slave. Since she is neither his mistress nor his handmaiden she is made from his side.<sup>21</sup> Christine repeats Hugh's observation that woman is not man's slave, but does not bother repeating that part of Hugh's text that implies that a woman should not be a man's mistress. This is clearly deliberate, for a little further on, she objects to Cicero's claim that because no one should serve someone lower than themselves, a man should never serve a woman. Lady Reason responds that it is the most virtuous who

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<sup>17</sup> *Othea*, p. 341; *Letter of Othea to Hector*, p. 120; *Advison-Cristine*, p. 131; *Prudence*, 237<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> See the on-line edition prepared by Chris L. Nighman from the Venice 1493 incunable edition, being corrected by relation to 'the most authoritative manuscripts', available at <http://info.wlu.ca/~wwwhist/faculty/cnighman/> under Paciencia Al.

<sup>19</sup> Earl Jeffrey Richards, 'Editing the *Cité des dames*', in *Au champ des escriptures*, ed. by Eric Hicks and others (Paris: Champion, 2000), p. 791.

<sup>20</sup> This tendency has been discussed by a number of writers, for instance, Judith Kellogg, 'Transforming Ovid. The Metamorphosis of Female Authority', in *Christine de Pizan and the Categories of Difference*, ed. by Marilyn Desmond (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), pp. 181–94; Patricia A. Phillippy, 'Establishing Authority: Boccaccio's *De Claris Mulieribus* and Christine de Pizan's *Le Livre de la cité des dames*', in *The Selected Writings of Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski (New York: Norton, 1997), pp. 329–61.

<sup>21</sup> Hugh of St-Victor, *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith*, Book 1, part 6, xxxv, p. 117.

is highest, thus leaving open the possibility that a woman should justly rule a man and underscoring Christine's disagreement with Hugh as well as with Cicero.<sup>22</sup>

We should therefore take Christine's early tendency to use phrases like 'prudence ou sapience' seriously. Here prudence is not being distinguished from some higher kind of reason that turns to spiritual things, but rather seems to be equated with it. In one of the passages quoted above Christine says that she takes Othea to be 'prudence et sagece' and early on she often seems to use 'prudence' and 'sapience' or 'sagece' interchangeably. If, after reading the *Epistre Othea* there were to remain any doubt about her use of the term 'prudence' as intended to include Hugh's 'sapience' it is swept away in the *Livre de paix* where she explicitly asserts: 'Ceste *prudence* sert tant aux biens espirituelz comme aux corporelz car par elle l'omme desire congnoistre Dieu et savoir les choses propices à sauvement et à les mettre à euvre, le amer et le craindre, sans laquelle congnoissance toute autre prudence n'est que folie' [This prudence serves as much spiritual goods as corporeal, for by her man desires to be acquainted with God and know what things are necessary for salvation and to act on them, to love him and to fear him, without which knowledge all other prudence is nothing but folly].<sup>23</sup>

So there is good reason to think that for Christine, at least early on, the words 'prudence' and 'sapience' are more or less interchangeable. She often treats them in this way in conjunction with an image that particularly captured her imagination, and which appears in various forms throughout her works. This trope deems prudence or wisdom, 'mere et conduisarresse de toutes vertus' [mother and guide of all virtues]. In the *Epistre Othea* Christine begins the allegory following the text devoted to Othea thus: 'Comme prudence et sagece soit mere et conduisarresse de toutes vertus, sans la quelle les autres ne pourroient estre bien gouvernees, est il neccessaire a l'esperit chevalereux que de prudence soit aournez' [As prudence and wisdom are mother and guide of all virtues, without which the others could not be well governed, it is necessary to the chivalrous spirit to be adorned with prudence].<sup>24</sup> The *Livre de Prudence* begins: 'Pour ce que Sapience est mere et conduiseresse de toutes les vertus, sans laquelle sentir homme ne puet solutairement vivre, est droiture, si comme dit Aristote, que elle soit demonstree par la meilleure raison et la plus convenable maniere' [Since wisdom is mother and guide of all the virtues, without which path man could not live well, it is right, as Aristotle says that it is demonstrated by the best reasons and in the most appropriate manner].<sup>25</sup> Later on in the same text Christine says that in order to be guided by the virtues a man will turn towards 'Prudence, qui est mere et premiere des vertus' [Prudence which is mother

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<sup>22</sup> *Cité des dames*, I. 9, p. 80 (trans. by Richards, p. 24).

<sup>23</sup> *Paix*, I. 7, p. 66.

<sup>24</sup> *Othea*, pp. 201–02; *Othea's Letter to Hector*, p. 38.

<sup>25</sup> *Prudence*, 236<sup>r</sup>.

and first among virtues].<sup>26</sup> A version of the phrase occurs also in the *Livre des faits et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*, Book I, Chapter 22, where Christine speaks of Charles's virtues and uses the expression 'comme prudence et sagece soit mere et conduisierresse des aultre vertus' [as prudence and wisdom are mother and guide of the other virtues].<sup>27</sup> In the *Livre de paix* we are told by contrast that it is '*Discrecion* qui est dicte mere et conduisierresse et toute la premiere des vertus' [discretion is called mother and guide and first of all the virtues].<sup>28</sup> This more common phrase, popularized in Christian monastic tradition by being used by St Benedict in his Rule (ch. 64), also appears in *Le Livre des trois vertus*.<sup>29</sup> It is not clear whether Christine thought of '*prudence*' and '*discrecion*' as synonymns, but as we will see below, she will later fuse these two phrases into a syncretic unity, characteristic of her tendency to construct a unity out of classical, biblical, and patristic sources.

Can we take it then that 'prudence' is functioning as a synonym for 'wisdom' or 'discretion' in Christine's mouth? One problem with the first of these proposals is that we do not now generally think of wisdom as a virtue: despite the Socratic tradition of equating virtue and knowledge. Nor does wisdom have quite the elevated character that Christine attributes to prudence in passages like the following from the *Livre de paix*: 'O Prudence, noble vertu, il n'est richesse ne propre noblesce fors celle qui vient de toi.' [Oh Prudence, noble virtue, there is no wealth nor true nobility other than that which comes from you].<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, since there are many places where Christine alludes to the Socratic equation of virtue and wisdom, which she knows through Stoic texts, it is perfectly reasonable to attribute to her an equation of wisdom and virtue. In the *Livre de Prudence* she says that investigation shows that 'seulement vertu est sapience' [only virtue is wisdom].<sup>31</sup> In the *Livre de paix* she quotes Seneca '*Virtus non aliud est quam recta ratio*', translating the passage as 'vertu, qui est souverain bien n'est autre chose que droit raison' [virtue which is the highest good is nothing other than right reason].<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, a close association in her mind between wisdom and prudence is suggested by her frequent repetition of a passage from *Proverbs* 2. 10, that is quoted in Latin at the end of the first allegory of the *Epistre Othea* and in French in the *Livre de prudence* as, 'Se sapience entre en ton cuer, science te plaira, conseil te gardera et prudence te

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<sup>26</sup> *Prudence*, 238<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> *Fais et bonnes meurs*, I. 22, p. 59; Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre des faits et bonnes moeurs du roi Charles V le sage*, trans. by Eric Hicks and Thérèse Moreau (Paris: Stock, 1997), p. 78.

<sup>28</sup> *Paix*, I. 7, p. 66.

<sup>29</sup> *Trois vertus*, I. 6, p. 25 (trans. by Lawson, p. 45).

<sup>30</sup> *Paix*, I. 5, p. 65.

<sup>31</sup> *Prudence*, 238<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> *Paix*, I. 5, p. 65.

maintendra par longue duree'.<sup>33</sup> It occurs as well, in a slightly altered form in the *Livre de paix*, 'Se sapience est entrée en ton courage, conseil te gardera et prudence te conservera' [If wisdom enters your heart, counsel will protect you and prudence conserve you].<sup>34</sup> Taken literally this biblical text treats prudence as not quite the same as wisdom, but rather as something which will follow from it. But the text from the Bible demonstrate that both the ancients and the Bible recognized the close connection between prudence and wisdom.

So Christine's earlier work manifests a tendency to equate prudence and wisdom and this in turn suggests that she did not, at the turn of the century, have a thorough knowledge of Oresme's translation of the *Ethics*. For Oresme uses the term 'sapience' for '*sophia*' and clearly follows Aristotle's articulation of five distinct intellectual virtues: 'art, science, prudence, sapience, entendement'.<sup>35</sup> But before proceeding to argue that Christine later modifies her language to bring it more closely in line with Aristotle's, I need to allay a doubt that began to assail me as I attempted to understand Christine's use of the term 'prudence'. Perhaps trying to find philosophical coherence in Christine's vocabulary is naïve. Although she appears to quote from a vast array of philosophers, her source is often a compilation. In the case of the *Epistre Othea*, the origin of her references to the words of the ancient philosophers is most often Guillaume de Tignonville's *Dits moraulx*, a contemporary translation of the *Liber philosophorum moralium antiquorum*, itself a Latin translation (via the Castilian) of the eleventh-century Arabic *Mokhtâr el-Hikam* of Abu'l Wefa Mubeschschir ben Fatik.<sup>36</sup> For the *Epistre Othea* another significant source is the *Chapelet des vertus*, a modified translation of an Italian work, the *Fiori di virtù*.<sup>37</sup>

When one examines the first of these one sees that it falls far short of what would now be deemed a coherent philosophical text. It is, as the title suggests a compilation of 'sayings' and biographical sketches, without argument or exposition. In it we

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<sup>33</sup> *Othea*, p. 202; *Prudence*, 236<sup>r</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *Paix*, I, 9, p. 73; the Authorised Version has 'When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee'.

<sup>35</sup> *Maistre Nicole Oresme, Le Livre de éthiques d'Aristote*, ed. by Albert D. Menut, p. 334.

<sup>36</sup> *Othea*, pp. 60–63; Christine de Pisan, *The Epistle of Othea*, trans. by Stephen Scrope, ed. by Curt F. Bühler, Early English Text Society Series, 264 (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. x. At least sixty-one of the citations of philosophers in the *Epistre Othea* (who include Plato, Aristotle, Hermes, and Pythagoras) come from Tignonville's text, translated by Stephen Scrope as *The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers*, ed. by Curt F. Bühler, Early English Text Society Original Series, 211 (London: Oxford University Press, 1941, reprinted 1961).

<sup>37</sup> *Othea*, pp. 46–53; Curt F. Bühler, 'The *Fleurs de toutes vertues*', *PMLA*, 64 (1949), 600–601, and Curt F. Bühler, 'The *Fleurs de toutes vertues* and Christine de Pizan's *l'Epître d'Othéa*', *PMLA*, 62 (1947), 32–44.

learn such gems concerning Socrates' wisdom as the following: 'Et vit une femme malade a laquelle il dist: Le mal se repose avec le mal' [And seeing an ill woman he said to her: 'Illness rests there with the ill'] and 'Et vit une jone pucelle qui aprenoit a scrire a laquelle il dist: Ne multiplie pas mal sur mal' [And seeing a maid learning to write he said, 'Don't multiply bad with bad'].<sup>38</sup> These aphorisms and numerous other misogynist quips have little to do with the Socrates of Plato's dialogues. They show how far this work is from an accurate transmission of the ancient texts, and also add to our appreciation of the sort of text to which Christine was responding when she wrote *Le Livre de la cité des dames*, and her other works defending women. In the *Dits moraulx* the works of the philosophers have undergone a process of embellishment and rough transmission, from Greek into Arabic, then into Castilian and then Latin, and from there into French. There is therefore little reason to expect to find an unambiguous meaning attaching to words that Christine has borrowed from such sources.

It is indeed from the two sources mentioned above that Christine has gleaned her characterization of prudence/wisdom as the mother and guide of the virtues, as well as the above mentioned reference to Aristotle. The long passage quoted from the introduction to the *Livre de Prudence* weaves these two borrowings together. The *Chapelet des vertus* contains the phrase 'Comme prudence est mere et conduresse de tous vertus sans laquelle nulles aultres ne pourroient estre bien gouvernees' [Since prudence is mother and guide of all the virtues without which none of the others would be well governed] as well as other long phrases used by Christine in the prologue to her first allegory of the *Epistre Othea*.<sup>39</sup> The claim that the virtue of prudence is much to be recommended since Aristotle, the prince of philosophers, says: 'Pour que sapience est la plus noble de toutes autres choses, doit elle estre monstree par la meilleur raison et la plus couvenable manniere' [Since wisdom is more noble than any other thing, it should be displayed by the best reason and in the most appropriate way] is made at the end of the first gloss in the *Epistre Othea*. It is then reused in the introduction to the *Livre de prudence* and derives from the *Dits moraulx*.<sup>40</sup>

As a source, Tignonville's *Dits moraulx* would not have given Christine a sophisticated understanding of Aristotle's philosophy. There is little in it that one can recognize as an outline of Aristotle's ethics. At most, one finds hints, such as the sentence which precedes the one quoted above, which speaks of wisdom [sapience]

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<sup>38</sup> R. Eder, 'Tignonvillana Inedita', *Romanische Forschungen*, 33 (1915), 851–1091, esp. p. 947.

<sup>39</sup> *Othea*, p. 386.

<sup>40</sup> R. Eder, 'Tignonvillana Inedita', p. 966; *Othea*, p. 202; translated in *Othea's Letter to Hector*, p. 37: 'And as the virtue of prudence is much to be recommended, so declares the prince of philosophers, Aristotle: "In that knowledge is the most noble of all other things, it must be demonstrated by the best reasoning and in the most appropriate manner."'

as a prerogative which God has given to men rather than to other beasts, so that the most noble man is the one who best uses his reason. This suggests a distant ancestry in Aristotle's view that the distinguishing characteristic and function of man is virtuous activity in accordance with reason.

The fact that the *Dits moraulx* could not have been the source of a sophisticated understanding of Aristotle's *phronesis* as the basic concept behind prudence does not, of course, show that Christine had not acquired such a grasp from elsewhere. Indeed, there are two reasons for thinking that when she wrote the *Epistre Othea* Christine may already have had some passing familiarity with Aristotle's discussion of the goods of fortune in Book 1 of the *Ethics*. First, Aristotle uses Priam, and by implication the history of Troy, to illustrate how fortune is changeable, and Christine's hundred stories from Troy can therefore be read as an extended development of this illustration.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, the intention to illustrate Aristotle is signalled by the page layout of the earliest manuscript of the *Epistre Othea* which is similar to that of Charles's copy of the Oresme translation.<sup>42</sup> Together these two facts strongly suggest that the whole of this early work by Christine should be read as an elaboration of Aristotle's recommendation of the pursuit of virtuous activity as an insurance against ill fortune. But there is no evidence of Christine having Aristotle's own texts to hand as a source for direct quotation at this stage in her career. Her immediate aim in using the above passage attributed to Aristotle by the *Dits moraulx* was probably to underscore another aspect of her general intention in writing the *Epistre Othea*. Rosalind Brown-Grant has persuasively argued that in this work Christine was consciously pursuing a policy of moralized allegorical writing to be contrasted with the moral ambiguities of the *Roman de la rose*.<sup>43</sup> The alleged view of Aristotle that Christine quotes is part of a passage in which it is suggested that he did not disdain the study of grammar, rhetoric, and poetry as did some (including Pythagoras) for he thought that wisdom should be set forth in the most appropriate manner.<sup>44</sup> We can thus see her quotation as primarily functioning as an authoritative justification for the method that she develops in the *Epistre Othea*, in

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<sup>41</sup> *Maistre Nicole Oresme, Le Livre de ethiques d'Aristote*, ed. by A. D. Menut, p. 130. 'Moult de transformations sont faictes en ceste vie et fortunes de toutes manieres, et avient foiz que une personne est habondant en grands biens par long temps et après en sa vieillesce il chiet en grans miseres et grans calamites. Ainsi est it raconté en escript du roy Priant es vers heroïques que de ce fist Homerus le poëte.'

<sup>42</sup> *Maistre Nicole Oresme, Le Livre de ethiques d'Aristote*, ed. by A. D. Menut, p. 46. Gianni Mombello, *La tradizione manoscritta dell' 'Epistre Othéa' di Christine de Pizan* (Turin: Accademia delle Scienze, 1967), pp. 23–24 and Fig. 2.

<sup>43</sup> Rosalind Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence of Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 56–64.

<sup>44</sup> Jane Chance, *Othea's Letter to Hector*, p. 37, translates 'monstree' by 'demonstrated' but the source of Christine's quotation indicates that it is not so much demonstration in the logical sense that is at issue here but the rhetorical and poetic presentation of ideas.

which she puts classical stories, rhetoric and poetry to use in order to teach wisdom, displaying it in the most appealing manner available.

While Christine may have come to acquire, through reading Boethius, a deeper understanding of the ancient notion of *phronesis* than the *Dits moraulx* could supply, she tells us in the *Livre du chemin de longue estude* that this book did not fall into her hands until the 5 October 1402.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, as we will see, Christine's favourite trope, prudence as mother and guide of the virtues is extremely well suited to being spelled out as a full characterization of Aristotelian *phronesis*. This is no accident, for the metaphor has its origins in a reading of Aristotle and is ubiquitous in medieval writers. It is found in Abelard who says in his *Ethics* 'Prudence, that is the discernment of good and evil, is the mother of the virtues rather than a virtue'.<sup>46</sup> In the *Collationes*, an earlier work, Abelard had used this phrase to capture one of two ways of thinking about prudence that are somewhat at odds with each other.<sup>47</sup> On the one hand he says that 'Socrates, through whom the study of ethics first and most greatly gained strength, distinguishes four species of virtue: prudence, justice, courage, and temperance. But some call prudent discernment the mother or origin of the virtues, rather than a virtue itself'.<sup>48</sup> Abelard does not tell us who these other authors are and we have not so far been able to conclusively identify them.<sup>49</sup> However, one could read Aristotle as the ultimate origin of this thought, for while he calls '*phronesis*' a virtue rather than an art, he also designates it, 'a truth-attaining rational quality concerned with action in relation to things that are good and bad for human beings'.<sup>50</sup> This could be taken to imply that it engenders the other virtues. He

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<sup>45</sup> Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre du chemin de longue estude*, ed. by Robert Püschel (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1974), p. 8.

<sup>46</sup> *Peter Abelard's Ethics*, ed. by David E. Luscombe, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 129 'Prudentia, id est boni malique discretio, mater est virtutum potius quam virtus.' Once again I have to express my gratitude to Constant Mews for having drawn my attention to this phrase in Abelard.

<sup>47</sup> On the date of the *Collationes*, see Constant J. Mews, 'On dating the works of Peter Abelard', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*, 52 (1985), 73–134 (pp. 104–26, reprinted in Mews, *Abelard and his Legacy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001).

<sup>48</sup> *Peter Abelard Collationes*, ed. by John Marenbon and Giovanni Orlandi (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), p. 131: 'Socrates quidem, per quem primum uel maxime moralis discipline studium conualuit, quator uirtutis species distinguit: prudentiam scilicet, iusticiam, fortitudinem, temperantiam. Nonnulli vero prudentie discretionem matrem potius siue originem virtutum quam uirtutem nominant.'

<sup>49</sup> Constant Mews has suggested to me that Abelard is in fact fusing the traditions of Cicero about prudence and St Benedict about discernment as mother of the virtues in a manner similar to Christine.

<sup>50</sup> Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1140b, 3–26, pp. 337–9. Oresme's translation is 'prudence est un habit vray factif avecques raison vers les choses qui sont bonnes ou males a homme.' *Maistre Nicole Oresme, Le Livre de ethiques d'Aristote*, ed. by A. D. Menut, p. 338.



also says that true virtue cannot exist without prudence, although he disagrees with Socrates' view that all virtues are forms of prudence.<sup>51</sup> Such doctrines may have led to a tradition of treating prudence as the discernment of good and evil, and mother of the virtues, rather than as the first of four cardinal virtues. Both of these traditions are manifest in Christine's quotations, without being clearly distinguished by her. According to one of these, prudence is the first of four cardinal virtues. According to the other, prudence is not so much a virtue but is 'the mother of the virtues'. As we will see, in the *Livre de paix* Christine manages to deftly amalgamate the two images.

Abelard mentions Socrates as the origin of the doctrine that there are four species of virtue, and his editors cite Isidore's *Etymologiae*, II. 4.5 as making this attribution. But he is just as likely to have known of the list of the cardinal virtues from Cicero, in whose *De officiis* they are named, and where it is explained that all that is morally right arises from one of four sources.<sup>52</sup> It arises either from 'the full perception and intelligent development of the true' (to which source belong wisdom and prudence), or from 'the conservation of organized society' (to which belongs justice), or has to do 'with the greatness and strength of a noble and invincible spirit' (courage), or with 'orderliness and moderation' (temperance). In his discussion Cicero says that he uses '*prudencia*' to translate the Greek word '*phronesis*' and explains, echoing Aristotle, that by it the Greeks meant 'the practical knowledge of things to be sought and things to be avoided' which he distinguishes from wisdom (*sapientia*), the term he uses to translate '*sophia*'.<sup>53</sup> Cicero also echoes the characterization of prudence that may have led to the 'mother of the virtues' tradition when, in *De inventione* II. 53. 160, he defines prudence as 'knowledge of things that are good, bad, and neither' and lists its parts as memory, intelligence, and foresight.<sup>54</sup>

Christine did not know these texts of Aristotle and Cicero in any great detail when she wrote the *Epistre Othea*. If she had read them, or some part of them, she certainly did not have them at hand to quote extensively. Nevertheless, what is also clear is that she was working with a medieval notion of prudence that had descended from Socrates' and Aristotle's *phronesis*, via Cicero and later twelfth-century authors. This is manifest in her *Livre de prudence* probably written in about 1406.<sup>55</sup> This work shows her developing an extended discussion of what is required by

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<sup>51</sup> Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1144b17, p. 371; Maistre Nicole Oresme, *Le Livre de ethiques d'Aristote*, ed. by A. D. Menut, p. 359.

<sup>52</sup> Cicero, *De officiis*, ed. by E. H. Warmington, trans. by Walter Miller, Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913) I. 4. 15, p. 17 and I. 43. 152, p. 155.

<sup>53</sup> Cicero, *De officiis*, I. 43. 153, p. 157.

<sup>54</sup> Ciceron, *De inventione*, trans. and ed. by G. Achard (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1994) II. 53. 160, p. 225.

<sup>55</sup> Reno, 'Le Livre de Prudence/Livre de la prod'homme de l'homme'.

prudence, which she implicitly recognizes as fundamental to morality. Here, although she begins with the passage quoted above in which ‘wisdom’ is the mother of the virtues, she is heavily influenced by the Ciceronian tradition which makes it one of four cardinal virtues. This is no doubt because this is the framework of the author she translates and glosses. The lesson that Christine emphasizes in this work is that he who lets wisdom into his heart will want to be guided by the four cardinal virtues named by Cicero, though Christine cites Seneca as her source.<sup>56</sup>

At this period of her intellectual development Christine must also have become familiar with the discussion of prudence in Aquinas’s *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, for which she translated passages inserted into her *L’advison Cristine* written in 1405.<sup>57</sup> Aquinas’s fusion of Christianity and Aristotle forms the background of what one might call Christine’s political epistemology, her treatment of political wisdom as a branch of theology, as discussed by Glynnis Cropp in this volume. In his commentary, Aquinas explains the difference between prudence and wisdom (*sophia*) as spelt out in Aristotle’s *Ethics*, though, as we have seen, this is a distinction that Christine does not immediately take to heart. Nevertheless, she understands well that ‘prudence belongs to the practical part of the soul, which reasons about contingent courses of action’ and concerns that which should be done.<sup>58</sup> And the centrality to good government of this practical knowledge,

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<sup>56</sup> *Prudence*, 238<sup>r</sup>–238<sup>v</sup>. ‘L’entendement bien disposé investigate et encerchie premierement prudence, quiert voye de la trouver et comment s’acointance il ara, a celle fin que il en puisse a son roy, c’est a son cuer, dire vrayes nouvelles et la mettre en son habitacion. Et ou la quiert il? Est ce es voies communes? Non, mais en la maison des vertus. Des vertus, comme dit Seneca, par les sentences de plusieurs saiges sont diffinies quatre especes principales, par lesquelles l’umain couraige se peut duyre a honnestement vivre. De ces quatre, ce dit il, la premiere est Prudence, la seconde Magnanimité ou hault couraige que on dit Force, la tierce Contenance ou Attrempece, la quarte Justice.’ [A well intentioned understanding first seeks and inquires after prudence desiring the means to find her and to make her acquaintance, with the aim that she can instruct its king, that is to say its heart, with true stories and install her in its residence. And where does it inquire after her? Is it in the public road? No, but in the house of the virtues. Of the virtues, as Seneca says, which are distinguished in the words of many wise men into four principle kinds, by means of which human courage can commit itself to living honestly. Of these four, he says, the first is prudence, the second magnanimity or high courage which one calls fortitude, the third continence or temperance, and the fourth justice.]

<sup>57</sup> Liliane Dulac and Christine M. Reno, ‘L’humanisme vers 1400, essai d’exploration à partir d’un cas marginal: Christine de Pizan traductrice de Thomas d’Aquin’, *Pratiques de la culture écrite en France au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle: Actes du Colloque international du CNRS, Paris, 16–18 mai 1992, organisé en l’honneur de Gilbert Ouy par l’Unité de recherche ‘Culture écrite du Moyen Age tardif’*, ed. by Monique Ornato and Nicole Pons, FIDEM, Textes et études du Moyen Age, 2 (Louvain-la-neuve, 1995), pp. 161–78.

<sup>58</sup> St Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, trans. by John P. Rowman, 2 vols (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1961), I, p. 16.

based in experience, memory and the capacity to learn, motivates her to write at length on the nature of prudence in both the *Livre de prudence* and the *Livre de paix*.

While the bulk of Christine's translation in the *Livre de prudence* is from pseudo-Seneca (Martin of Braga), it was pointed out by Rosamund Tuve that the last few pages are a translation of part of Alan of Lille's treatise *De virtutibus et de vitiis et de donis Spiritus Sanctus*.<sup>59</sup> Alan defines prudence as 'discepcion de bonnes et mauvaises choses en la fuyte du mal et l'election du bien' [discernment of good and evil things in the flight from evil and pursuit of good] thus echoing the definitions given by Aristotle and Cicero.<sup>60</sup> Alan then goes on to list the species of the genus prudence as 'entendement, providence, circonspection, docilité, caucion, intelligence, memoire' [understanding, foresight, circumspection, educability, caution, intelligence, and memory]. Defined thus, prudence looks rather like what we would now call intelligence, or perhaps, moral intelligence. And indeed, translators of Aristotle do find themselves translating '*phronesis*' as 'intelligence' in certain contexts, although these words by no means have the same general sense, and some translators reserve the word 'intelligence' for *noûs*, the capacity to apprehend first principles, which Aristotle distinguishes from prudence.<sup>61</sup> The definitions provided in the *Livre de prudence* inform the discussion of prudence in the *Livre de paix*, and should be taken as background to it. However, as I will go on to argue, in the later work Christine shows evidence of having profitably extended her solitary study and to have by this time read more closely the original Aristotle from which her term had descended. This may have been in French, but it is equally likely that she knew Aristotle in a Latin version which was the source of the quotations she used in the *Livre de paix*.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Rosamund Tuve, 'Notes on the Virtues and Vices', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 26 (1963), 264–303 (p. 296).

<sup>60</sup> *Prudence*, 268<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>61</sup> Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1141a 7, p. 341.

<sup>62</sup> See Constant J. Mews, in this volume. Two scholars have recently argued that Christine was directly influenced by Oresme's translation of Aristotle's *Ethics*, Kate L. Forhan, 'Reading Backward: Aristotelianism in the Political Thought of Christine de Pizan', in *Au champ des escriptures*, ed. by Eric Hicks and others (Paris: Champion, 2000), pp. 359–81 (366–67), and Sylvie Lefèvre, 'Christine de Pizan et l'Aristote Oresmien', in *Au champ des escriptures*, pp. 231–50 (240–43). Forhan's argument is that the description of 'félicité humaine' at the beginning of the *Livre du corps de policie* evokes an illustration in contemporary manuscripts of Oresme's translation of the *Ethics*. However, this is not evidence that Christine had closely read Oresme's translation. The passage that Forhan identifies in fact derives from Augustine's *City of God* and is claimed by Angus Kennedy to have been one of the passages that Christine borrowed from the translation of Valerius Maximus made by Hesdin and Gonesse, *Corps de policie*, p. 146. Of course, this is not incompatible with Christine also having been familiar with the illustrative program of Oresme's translation of the *Ethics*, but it is one thing to have dipped into a book, and looked at its illustrations, another to

Christine begins her discussion of the virtues in the fourth chapter of Book 1 of the *Livre de paix*, and she introduces them with a maxim, which could be taken to sum up Stoic ethics, taken from the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, then attributed to Cicero. It is rendered in the Loeb translation 'All the rules for noble living should be based on virtue, because virtue alone is within her own control, whereas all else is subject to the sway of fortune.'<sup>63</sup> Christine, however, reverses the order of the sentences. The view expressed in this maxim is one that Christine had developed at length in *Le Chemin de longue estude* and *La Mutacion de Fortune*, in which texts she was heavily influenced by Dante and her recent reading of Boethius. In the *Livre de paix*, she expands on the meaning of the maxim by giving her version of an argument from Aristotle, which is plausibly derived from the very same passage in *Ethics* I. 10 that I earlier identified as a possible inspiration for the *Epistre Othea* (in Oresme's translation the argument is to be found in Chapters 15 and 16). Here Aristotle says that 'none of man's functions possess the quality of permanence so fully as the activities in conformity with virtue' for whatever the changeability of fortune, the virtuous man will make the best of his lot.<sup>64</sup> And although Christine does not give us an exact source for the argument she puts into Aristotle's mouth, her version of the argument, which is that the thing that is truly lovable must be something which has the highest degree of unchangeable goodness, echoes his.<sup>65</sup>

Just prior to this discussion Christine says that she has 'cueilli aucunes fleurectes souefves et belles ou champs des escritures' [gathered some beautiful and sweet flowers from the field of letters] to make a chaplet to adorn the young prince's brow. And developing this metaphor she invents a trope by which to combine the image of prudence as mother of the virtues with that which makes it one among them. She says that the flowers of the chaplet she has woven have issued from the seven principle roots of virtue, of which the first, the one from which the others are born

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have closely read it. Sylvie Lefèvre also argues that in the *Corps de policie* features of Christine's version of the story of Thales and the olive harvest, that she could have taken from Hesdin and Gonesse, nevertheless show evidence of a knowledge of Oresme's version of the story. This suggests the possibility of some familiarity with the Oresme translation, but could also be explained by Christine's knowledge of the story from other sources. For a fuller discussion of this image, see Karen Green, 'Philosophy and Metaphor: the Significance of Christine's Blunders', forthcoming in *Parergon*, 22 (2005).

<sup>63</sup> *Ad C. Herennium de ratione dicendi*, IV. 17. 24, trans. by Harry Caplan, *The Loeb Classical Library* (London: Heinemann, 1954), p. 291.

<sup>64</sup> Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1100b 10–1101a 8, p. 51. Here the current accepted version of Aristotle's *Ethics* does not correspond very well with Oresme's text, but the same sentiment is clearly conveyed in *Maistre Nicole Oresme: Le Livre de ethiques d'Aristote*, ed. by A. D. Menut, pp. 133–35.

<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, Christine never repeats Oresme's exact formulation of Aristotle's doctrine that 'felicité est operacion d'ame selon vertu', *Maistre Nicole Oresme: Le Livre de ethiques d'Aristote*, ed. by A. D. Menut, pp. 121 and 129.

and derive, is known as prudence; ‘lesquelles dictes fleurectes sont yssues des germes entre les autres nobles plantes de vij. principaulx racines de vertu dont la premiere et de laquelle les autres naissent et viennent a nom de prudence’ [These flowers spring from seeds of those noble plants of the seven principal rootstocks of virtue, of which the first, being the one from which all the others sprout, is called *prudence*].<sup>66</sup> Developing the imagery of roots, already implicit in Cicero, allows Christine to treat prudence as a root of virtue from which others descend. Oddly, Christine here departs slightly from the standard catalogue of four cardinal virtues. After prudence she names justice, magnanimity, force, clemency, liberality, and truth. Temperance seems to have disappeared and magnanimity, which Christine also calls ‘courage’, is distinguished from force, although previously she had treated them as names for the same virtue.<sup>67</sup> One might, drawing a fairly long bow, see this as further evidence of a direct Aristotelian influence, laid over her original characterizations that were mediated by Cicero. For one could perhaps explain the disappearance of temperance as an independent virtue as following from a reading of Aristotle. Although he speaks a great deal about temperance, he also suggests in Book VI, where he discusses *phronesis* at length, that temperance is merely the preservation of prudence, and claims this is what the word ‘temperance’ means.<sup>68</sup> Perhaps, reading this, Christine could have been led to downplay temperance as an important independent virtue.

The next chapter of the *Livre de paix* begins with a Latin quotation which Christine identifies as coming from Seneca: ‘Nulum bonum sine ratione est. Virtus non aliud est quam recto ratio. Omnes virtutes rationes sunt. Sequitur ratio naturam; quid ergo est ratio nisi nature imitacio.’<sup>69</sup> The beginning of de Pizan’s text is a translation and expansion of this quotation: ‘Nul bien, ce dist *Senecque*, n’est sans raison. Doncques, encores au propos dessus dit, vertu, qui est souverain bien, n’est autre chose que droit raison. Raison, ce dit il, ensuit nature; si s’ensuit doncques que toutes choses se doivent fonder sur raison et entreprendre et encommencier de ceste raison qui est fille de *Dieu* ensuit prudence’ [Nothing good, so says Seneca, is without reason. So, with regard to what was said above, virtue, which is the highest good, is nothing other than right reason. Reason, as he says, follows nature; so it follows then that everything should ground itself on reason and from learning and beginning from this reason, which is daughter of God, follows prudence].<sup>70</sup> Christine

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<sup>66</sup> *Paix*, I. 4, p. 64.

<sup>67</sup> See *Prudence*, 238<sup>f</sup> where she speaks of ‘Magnanimité ou hault courage que on dit Force’.

<sup>68</sup> Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1140b12, p. 339; Maistre Nicole Oresme, *Le Livre de ethiques d’Aristote*, ed. by A. D. Menut, p. 338.

<sup>69</sup> In fact it seems to be originally a compilation from Seneca, *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium*, 66. 12, 32, and 39, ed. by O. Hense (Leipzig: Teubner, 1938), pp. 213, 219, 221.

<sup>70</sup> *Paix*, I. 5, p. 65.

expands on this, but she shifts subtly from speaking of prudence to speaking of discretion. Understanding, she says, engenders a knowledge how to act, and from this follows discretion.<sup>71</sup> She then repeats a version of a definition of prudence that she had quoted from Alan of Lille in *Prudence*, but she applies it to discretion: ‘Discrecion, [...] c’est une vertu par laquelle se peut cognoistre ce que est bon et ce que est mauvais en discernant le bien du mal en l’election du bien pour ce que il est valable et deboutant le mal pour ce qu’il est nuisible [Discretion [...] is a virtue by means of which one may know what is good and evil through discerning the good from the bad in the choice of that which is good because it is worthy and the rejection of the bad because it is harmful].’<sup>72</sup> There follows a passage in which Christine explains why discretion is called ‘the mother of the virtues’, which shows evidence of a more thorough familiarity with Aristotle’s discussion of the virtues in the first book of the *Ethics* than had earlier been manifest.

For Aristotle, most virtues are a mean which lies between two forms of vice, one of which is an excess, the other a deficiency. He begins Book VI of the *Ethics* by reminding his reader of this doctrine, which he had spelt out at length in Book II. So, courage is the mean between rashness and cowardliness, temperance a mean between self-indulgence and ‘insensibility’ (a word Aristotle invents for a trait not usually named). Liberality is the mean between prodigality and meanness.<sup>73</sup> Although she does not explicitly mention the doctrine of the mean, one can detect the influence of this passage from Aristotle in Christine’s explanation of why

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<sup>71</sup> *Paix*, I. 5, pp. 65–66.

<sup>72</sup> *Paix*, I. 5, p. 66. Christine introduces this passage with the phrase: ‘Dist l’Ecclesiaste’ but I suspect this does not refer to *Ecclesiastes* but rather to her earlier citation of Alanus which she introduces thus *Prudence*, p. 56: ‘Cy s’ensuivent les diffinicion des quatre vertus cardinales et de leurs parties selon l’opinion des hommes ecclesiastiques. Ces quatres sont dittes cardinales ou commençailles ou principales, car ce sont les principes des aultres vertus, et d’elles ont commencement. La premiere d’icelles est Prudence. Si parlerons premierement d’icelle en veant quelle chose est prudence; secondement en quelz choses elle consiste et estent; tiercement en quantes especes elle est divisee.

Le Chapitre de Prudence

Prudence est discepcion de bonnes et mauvaises choses en la fuyte du mal et en l’election du bien.’

[Here follow the definitions of the four cardinal virtues and their parts according to the opinions of ecclesiastical men. These four are called cardinal, primary or principal, because they are the principles of the other virtues which begin from these. The first of these is prudence. So we will speak first of this, seeing what prudence is; secondly what things it consists in; thirdly what kinds it is divided into.

The Chapter on Prudence

Prudence is the discernment of good and evil in the flight from evil and choice of good.]

<sup>73</sup> Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1107a28–1107b23, *Maistre Nicole Oresme, Le Livre de ethiques d’Aristote*, ed. by A. D. Menut, p. 165.

discretion is the mother of the virtues. For she says that without discretion the virtues can turn into vices: as when wisdom is sown among swine and becomes folly, or a man is so temperate that he allows his father to be vilified without avenging him, or courage leads to someone refusing to complain of an ill that can be remedied. Christine's examples are not Aristotle's and there are significant differences between his discussion and hers, but it is quite plausible to see her as glossing him in this passage. Indeed Christine goes on to make a remark which suggests that she has been somewhat overwhelmed by the argumentation of 'the prince of philosophers', for she says that the matter could be treated better and more subtly through the proofs of Aristotle which her poor understanding could not represent nor describe.<sup>74</sup>

Discretion and prudence are very closely associated in Christine's discussion. For reasons that are unclear to me, prudence is here designated the daughter of discretion, even though the description of discretion given by Christine could well be a description of prudence. Following her tendency to find the common core of wisdom in ancient and Christian traditions she here synthesizes the two traditions by making discretion the mother of prudence, itself the mother of further virtues. It is at this point in her discussion that Christine makes the comment quoted above that prudence serves the spiritual as much as the corporeal good of man, because by it man wants to know and to act on his understanding of what is required for salvation. This suggests that through her reading of Aquinas and Aristotle himself, Christine had acquired a better understanding of the original distinction between knowledge as *sophia* and the practicality of *phronesis* than Hugh of St-Victor had demonstrated in the passage discussed above. Hugh, much less shaped by Ciceronian ideas of prudence than Abelard, took the practicality of prudence to imply that it is not concerned with spiritual matters. This view is indeed suggested by *Ethics*, VI. 7. 6 where Aristotle distinguishes *sophia* from *phronesis* and says that 'prudence is concerned with the affairs of man'.<sup>75</sup> However, as Christine seems to have grasped, what is important to *phronesis* is not so much that it does not deal with spiritual matters as that it is active and applied. Some sorts of knowledge imply no activity, for instance the knowledge of mathematics. One could perhaps be a perfect mathematician without ever doing anything. For this reason Aristotle says, just prior to his claim that prudence is concerned with the affairs of men that Anaxagoras and Thales are called 'wise' but not 'prudent'. This makes the distinction between *sophia* and *phronesis* or (sapience and prudence) very close to that between theoretical and applied knowledge, or between knowledge that and knowledge how. However, this does not quite characterize the distinction, for *phronesis* also encompasses

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<sup>74</sup> *Paix*, I. 5, pp. 66–67 'de laquelle matiere et qui moult est belle se pourroit plus longuement traictier mieulx et plus soubtilement par les preuues d'Aristote que mon povre entendement ne saoit ymaginer ne descripre' [It would be appropriate to treat this very beautiful subject at greater length and more subtly by way of Aristotle's proofs which my poor understanding can hardly represent or describe].

<sup>75</sup> Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1141b8, p. 345.

something like a will or tendency to act on one's knowledge of the good, as well as sufficient discernment to know how to act in particular circumstances. Aristotle says that *phronesis* is concerned with action, and Oresme translates him 'prudence est vertu active' [prudence is active virtue].<sup>76</sup>

We have at least done enough to show that Christine's use of 'prudence' is grounded in Aristotle's *phronesis* and that translating her term ultimately inherits the difficulties associated with translating his. In the *Livre de paix* Christine has given up her earlier tendency to equate prudence and sapience, and is using the term 'prudence' with the same kind of implication of activity that Aristotle had attached to *phronesis*. This is compelling evidence that by this time she had read Aristotle and was deferring to his usage.

While the references to Aristotle in her *Epistre Othea* give us little reason to believe that Christine had a deep knowledge of Aristotle's *Ethics* when she first turned to writing works with a political import, we have seen that she may well have had some acquaintance with Oresme's translation, and that the general orientation of her political writing owes a great deal to Aristotle. Aristotle virtually identifies political science with *phronesis* or at least suggests that political science is a form of *phronesis*, which encompasses also household management and the pursuit of what is good for the self.<sup>77</sup> Prudence is the capacity to act in accordance with what is best for humans. Thus it follows, according to Aristotle, that 'if a man have the one moral virtue of prudence he will also have all the moral virtues together with it.'<sup>78</sup> So, far from seeing Christine as conflating all the virtues with the narrow self-interest called prudence, we should see her as faithfully following Aristotle when she assumes that all virtue stems from prudence, and that the active pursuit of this virtue is particularly the province of the prince. By placing her thought in its Aristotelian context we can also counter an old tendency within the discussion of Christine's political thought to say that she is more of a moralist than a political thinker.<sup>79</sup> To say this is to judge Christine's political thought very much from the point of view of a post-Aristotelian conception of *realpolitik*. Christine sees politics as a practical science to be applied in particular situations on the basis of experience and good council. She is aware that there are different forms of political organization, but she does not need to discuss them since she is writing for a polity that has the best form of government, monarchy. Its health depends on the practical wisdom of its

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<sup>76</sup> Maistre Nicole Oresme, *Le Livre de éthiques d'Aristote*, ed. by A. D. Menut, p. 344.

<sup>77</sup> Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1141a20, 1141b23, pp. 345 & 347; Maistre Nicole Oresme, *Le Livre de éthiques d'Aristote*, ed. by A. D. Menut, p. 344.

<sup>78</sup> Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1144b32, p. 158; Maistre Nicole Oresme, *Le Livre de éthiques d'Aristote*, ed. by A. D. Menut, p. 360.

<sup>79</sup> Gianni Mombello, 'Quelques Aspects de la pensée politique de Christine de Pisan d'après ses oeuvres publiées', in *Culture et politique en France à l'époque de l'humanisme et de la renaissance* (Turin: Accademia delle Scienze, 1971), pp. 43–153.



monarch, a wisdom which must to a large extent be acquired through education and experience. Christine's examples can thus be seen as contributing to this education and as transmitting a kind of knowledge which is as much political as moral.

I have said enough to head off the temptation to read 'prudence' in Christine's texts with its modern connotations, and I have argued that there is no more adequate translation of '*prudence*' than the somewhat misleading homophonic one. Nevertheless, in order to mitigate a tendency to hear nothing but rational self-interest in the word 'prudence', it is worth pointing out that even in English the word has other connotations. One is a connection with the word 'care' or 'careful', since in one sense to be prudent is to be careful. Unlike 'prudence', the term 'care' has not lost the sense in English of being potentially other directed and motivational. It also almost always makes sense to replace Christine's 'prudence' with 'care', and it makes quite good sense to think of care as the mother of the virtues. To hear the evocation of 'care' in Christine's writing would also make her the earliest feminist exponent of the philosophy of care, a reading of her which would be in accord with my earlier discussion of her work.<sup>80</sup> Since Christine's prudence is a kind of knowledge, and care has been represented rather as an attitude taken in the pursuit of knowledge about particular things, one cannot exactly equate prudence and care. Nevertheless, it is perhaps helpful in understanding Christine's term to remember that prudence is closely connected with care and concern. It is also worth noting that modern advocates of the ethic of care see it as an ethic directed towards the concrete and particular, as is Aristotle's *phronesis*.

It is no longer possible to find a single word in English which carries the full sense of Christine's '*prudence*'. This is partly because '*prudence*' was in a sense a technical term that had its place in a theory of the world that we no longer generally accept. This theory was an amalgam of Christianity and Stoicism, descended from Plato and Aristotle, according to which God or providence had designed a world in which everything tended towards its own good. It encompassed the doctrine that a sufficiently wise and careful investigation into the nature of things would lead to an understanding that one's own genuine best interest was to attain virtue in the highest degree possible. Given this background we can see why Christine can be sanguine that the virtuous pursuit of the public good is also what is best for the prince. She does not mean that it will automatically be in his narrow self-interest, but rather that it will be in his interest as an intelligent moral being, whose historic mission is the pursuit of the public good, and who will at some time have to account for his mistakes to his maker.

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<sup>80</sup> Karen Green, *The Woman of Reason* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), pp. 12, 40–43, 58–60.



## Philosophy, the Liberal Arts, and Theology in *Le Livre de la mutacion de Fortune* and *Le Livre de l'advison Cristine*

GLYNNIS M. CROPP

For her description of philosophy and the liberal arts in *Le Livre de la mutacion de Fortune*, Christine de Pizan could draw on a long tradition founded in classical Greek and Roman culture. From late antiquity, a succession of scholars—Augustine, Martianus Capella, Boethius, Cassiodorus, Isidore of Seville, to name the most notable—had helped define the medieval divisions of knowledge and establish the common teaching curriculum. The seven liberal arts, the trivium and quadrivium, together with several other intellectual disciplines, notably theology, ethics, and politics, thus comprise philosophy (*philosophia*) or knowledge (*scientia*). By etymology, the word and concept of *philosophia*, ‘love of wisdom’, were frequently equated with *sapientia*, ‘wisdom’, and identified with a feminine image: philosophy, mother of the liberal arts and sciences, with a nurturing, protective role.

In manuscripts philosophy was frequently represented either as a feminine figure with a ladder, the steps of which denote the seven liberal arts, or as a tree diagram with its constituent disciplines.<sup>1</sup> In the west portal of Chartres cathedral, the seven liberal arts, each accompanied by a philosopher-scholar from antiquity, surround the Blessed Virgin Mary in majesty. In this representation human knowledge and wisdom are as though related through the Virgin Mary to divine wisdom.<sup>2</sup> It is useful

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<sup>1</sup> For example, in twelfth- and thirteenth-century manuscripts containing William of Conches’s commentary on the *Consolatio philosophiae*; see William of Conches, *Glosae super Boetium*, ed. by Lodi Nauta, CCCM 158 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), plates 1, 4, and 5; see also the diagram, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Whitney S. Stoddard, *The Sculptors of the West Portals of Chartres Cathedral* (New York: Norton, 1989), plates 47 and 49; Alain Erlande-Brandenburg, *Chartres. Dans la*

to keep these images in mind as we explore the relationship of philosophy and theology.

It is more difficult to situate theology, but useful at this juncture to summarize a few relevant points. Saint Augustine held that, as God is wisdom and philosophy means 'love of wisdom',<sup>3</sup> philosophy encompasses close study of Christian thought. In the early Middle Ages *theologia* denoted Holy Scripture, hence biblical exegesis, on which theological studies were based until the twelfth century. Then, on the one hand, Peter Abelard wanted to widen the meaning and application to the study of religious matters beyond the basis of Scripture and ran the risk of opposing ecclesiastical authority. On the other hand, Alan of Lille attempted to codify theology as a discipline based on the writing of the Church Fathers as well as Scripture. For Thomas Aquinas, Aristotle provided a scientific model that could be applied to the teaching of the Christian revelation. In a crisis (c. 1265–1270) at the University of Paris, a number of masters claimed the right to study philosophy for its own sake, separate from theology. The medieval synthesis and hierarchy thus began to break apart as both philosophy and theology assimilated Aristotle's philosophy, and the study of logic dominated the arts course leading to the study of theology. In the fourteenth century, the force of hierarchy and universal order waned; lines of thought changed, as faith became more disengaged from reason and renewed interest in humanism appeared, freed from theological suppositions.<sup>4</sup>

In Christine's time, Jean Gerson advocated reform of theological studies, trying to redress the balance away from dominant Aristotelianism. It is unclear how deeply Christine was affected by contemporary debates of this kind and the shifting currents of thought, but she was of her time and her writing reveals her love of knowledge, as the Sebillé recognizes in *Le Livre du chemin de long estude*.<sup>5</sup>

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*lumière de la foi* (Paris: Laffont, 1986), pp. 30 and 37.

<sup>3</sup> *The City of God Against the Pagans (De civitate dei)*, VIII. 1, ed. by D. S. Wiesen, Loeb Classical Library, 7 vols (London: Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), III, pp. 2–3.

<sup>4</sup> Etienne Gilson, *La Philosophie au moyen âge*, 2 vols (Paris: Payot, 1976), II, pp. 710–19; Gordon Leff, *Medieval Thought. St Augustine to Ockham* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1958), pp. 168–303; P. Courcelle, *La Consolation de philosophie dans la tradition littéraire. Antécédents et postérité de Boèce* (Paris: Etudes augustinienes, 1967), pp. 77–81, plates 22–27; A. J. Minnis and A. B. Scott, *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c. 1100–c. 1375. The Commentary-Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), pp. 46, 124–26, 159–62; Janet Coleman, *A History of Political Thought: From Ancient Greece to Early Christianity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), Chapters 4 and 6; Janet Coleman, *A History of Political Thought: From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), Chapter 1.

<sup>5</sup> 'Fille, Dieux te vueille tenir / En paix d'ame et de conscience / Et en l'amour qu'as a science / Ou ta condicion t'encline' (*Long estude*, ed. by A. Tarnowski), vv. 490–93.

In *Le Livre de la mutacion de Fortune* (1403),<sup>6</sup> philosophy envelops all formal learning and knowledge is divided into individual subjects, including theology. In *Le Livre de l'advison Cristine* (1405),<sup>7</sup> this comprehensive notion of learning and knowledge is still present, but in the third part of the work philosophy is represented as a woman who, in leading the protagonist Cristine to recognize God's purpose in the Christian life, is revealed as the source of 'sapience vraie' and 'vraie felicité', that is as theology, to which Christine de Pizan had already attached particular importance in *La Mutacion*. It is proposed to examine the philosophy–theology nexus in the contexts of these two works and the application of the liberal arts to Christian doctrine and thought, looking also for differences in Christine de Pizan's thinking in the interval between composition of the two treatises.

The context in which the account of philosophy occurs in *La Mutacion de Fortune* is important. The author has already described Fortune's castle residence built on a rock, surrounded by the Sea of Great Peril (vv. 1461–4272). The tour of the castle leads to a splendid upper gallery (vv. 7053–7162) where wall paintings, which in number and subject defy the narrator's powers of expression (vv. 7084–86, 7097–7103), depict exploits and conquests of emperors, kings, and princes (vv. 7104–17). These were determined by the power of Fortune from which only God's spiritual gifts and grace are said to be exempt (vv. 7168–172). At this point the narrator consciously digresses, explicitly mentions both interruption of her plan (vv. 7173–80) and her awe and modesty at approaching her subject of the spectacle of universal history (vv. 7187–194), which constitutes the greater part of this work. Amidst the diversity in Fortune's gallery, she has spotted the order of philosophy: '[...] par belles arranges, / Toutes les sciences donnees / De Dieu, par bel ordre ordenees' (vv. 7184–86) [...in beautiful rows, all the God-given sciences, arranged in beautiful order], 'Philosophie y vi assise / Moult hautement [...] haulte maistresse' (vv. 7195–97) [I saw Philosophy seated there, in a very high position, ... eminent mistress]. Her account will be authentic, unembellished, dependent on 'les escriptures, qu'y vy' (v. 7203) [the writings I saw there]. There seems to be a paradox in this statement. On one hand she *saw* philosophy. On the other she refers to a written source, rather than pictorial representation such as in frescoes or manuscript illustrations.<sup>8</sup> When referring elsewhere in this work to written sources, the author uses the verbs *lire* (v. 4835, 4965) or *trouver* (v. 4843–44), not *veoir*. It can perhaps be assumed, therefore, that Christine de Pizan envisaged on the wall a tree of knowledge diagram, with exposition. For her sources were written, as Solente showed in her edition of the text:<sup>9</sup> the short definitions of Brunetto Latini in his

<sup>6</sup> *Mutacion de Fortune*, vv. 7173–8070 (pp. 103–34).

<sup>7</sup> *L'Advison Cristine*, pp. 91–142.

<sup>8</sup> See A. Tobler and E. Lommatzsch, *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch* (Berlin: Weidmann and Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1915–2002), iv, pp. 530–33.

<sup>9</sup> *Mutacion de Fortune*, i, pp. xxiv–xxv, l–lix.

*Tresor*,<sup>10</sup> filled out with details from Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*<sup>11</sup> and occasionally from some other work. Figures 1 and 2 show the divisions of philosophy as described in *La Mutacion* and *Le Tresor*. We shall concentrate only on aspects where Christine de Pizan added something new or different: theology, the quadrivium, politics, and dialectic.

The passage is divided into sixteen sections of unequal length, each introduced by a rubric: 'Ci dit de Philosophie', 'Ci dit de Theorique' [Here she speaks about Philosophy. Here she speaks about Theory] etc. In line with Brunetto Latini's description, philosophy is defined initially as enquiry into things natural, divine or spiritual, and human. Its constituent sciences are divided into theoretical and practical. The theoretical sciences are *theologie*, *phisique*, and *mathematique*, the last of these subdivided into the four subjects of the quadrivium, each of which is described in a separate section. Christine de Pizan's appropriation and adaptation of her source material are straightforward, even though at this stage she omits acknowledgement of its author. For example, *phisique* is briefly defined by a faithful octosyllabic rendering of Brunetto Latini's statement: 'La seconde si est phisique, par qui nous savons la nature des choses ki ont cors et conversent entor les corporaus choses, c'est a dire des homes et des biestes, des oisiaus, des poissons, des plantes et des pieres, et des autres corporaus choses ki sont entre nous' (I. 3. 20–24; p. 19) [The second is physics, by means of which we know the nature of things which have bodies and exist among corporal things, that is humans and animals, birds, fish, plants, and stones, and the other corporal things around us]:

La seconde si est Phisique,  
 Qui nous enseigne et nous applique  
 A chose entendre moins obscure:  
 C'est de trestous corps la nature  
 Et qui conversent environ,  
 Les corporaulx, com nous diron,  
 Ce sont hommes, bestes, oysiaux,  
 Poissons, pierres et arbrisseaulx,  
 Plantes, herbes et toutes choses,  
 Qui forme et corps ont en eulx closes,  
 Et qui tout ensemble repairent  
 Et aux hommes ça jus apperent. (vv. 7457–468)

[The second is physics, which teaches and directs us to understand less obscure matters: it concerns the nature of all bodies that exist around us, corporal things, as we

<sup>10</sup> *Li Livres dou tresor de Brunetto Latini*, ed. by F. J. Carmody (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1948). References are given in brackets in the text.

<sup>11</sup> *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX*, ed. by W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911). References are given in brackets in the text. The edition has no pagination.

say: humans, animals, birds, fish, stones, and trees, plants, grasses, and all things which exist together and are evident to humans on earth].

Theologie, 'la nature des choses celestielles', has, however, been subdivided into no fewer than nine subjects in an extensively amplified description. The first fifteen lines (vv. 7293–7308) correspond to Brunetto Latini's statement that theology concerns the spiritual and teaches about God, the Trinity, the Catholic faith and the apostolic church, but without reference to Holy Scripture, the traditional cornerstone of theology (l. 3. 2; p. 19). The following part of Christine's text (vv. 7309–7468), which makes this the longest section in the interpolation, extols theology as the supreme branch of knowledge in which all others are contained:

Ceste est la superceleste  
Science, qui, par son enqueste,  
La deïté haute et benigne  
Nous demonstre; [...]  
Car ceste ne traicte qu'affin  
De Dieu, en qui tout se termine. (vv. 7309–19)

[This is the supercelestial science which, through its enquiry, reveals to us the supreme, merciful deity; [ ...] for it deals only with what is close to God, in whom everything ends].

The reader is bidden to seek the liberal arts in theology where are found 'parfaite grammaire' (vv. 7325–26), 'souveraine dyaletique' (v. 7351), 'souveraine rethorique' (v. 7365), 'vraye astronomie' (v. 7413), and so on. The laudatory epithets distinguish the special role each of the arts has in theology. Grammar, for example, is applied to preaching about the Trinity, with correct spelling for purifying the conscience, removing sin, and writing about virtues and good actions and words. Arithmetic is sovereign in terms of the three persons united in the Trinity, music represents good conscience, the sweet organ expressing concord of mouth and heart in the celestial harmony. In astronomy the sun represents God's son, from sunrise (Christ's birth) to sunset (his death), the moon is the Church, the stars are the saints. To the seven liberal arts, which thus serve theology in their highest function and purpose, Christine de Pizan added medicine and law. There is perhaps an analogy with Isidore of Seville's inclusion of chapters on these two subjects immediately after those on the trivium and quadrivium. Furthermore in a section entitled 'De initio medicinae' Isidore explains why a doctor must be conversant with the liberal arts as they all pertain to medicine which is second only to philosophy (IV. xiii). In a similar manner Christine de Pizan justified her programme at this juncture as intended for a 'Vray et parfait theologien' (v. 7450), who must know all the sciences. By virtue of this long discourse and its pre-eminent place in the whole interpolation, she has made the liberal arts constituents of theology before their particular relationship to philosophy is defined. In short, the seven liberal arts, medicine, and law are all described as harnessed to Christian thought and purpose. They are indeed handmaids of theology.

The source of this exposition remains problematical. Quoting three sentences as justification, Solente suggested it was partly inspired by Alan of Lille's *Regulae de sacra theologia*.<sup>12</sup> It is hard to accept this basis, for the Latin quotations seem to correspond only vaguely to elements in Christine de Pizan's exposition. The *Regulae* do not contain further convincing evidence, except the definition 'Supercoelestis vero scientia, id est theologia',<sup>13</sup> which Christine's statement 'Ceste est la superceleste / Science, [...]' (vv. 7309–310) echoes. One other association, unnoticed by Solente, is discernible in Alan's prologue: he justified the purpose of his work, to codify theology, on the grounds that all the liberal arts have *regulae*, formal rules or principles. For example, arithmetic has *porismata*, geometry has theorems. He has therefore prepared such a set of rules, or precepts, for theology, beginning with God's unity and working his way through Christian doctrine to the sacraments of the Church, quoting the authority of the Church Fathers and Boethius as well as Holy Scripture. In this way he put theology on a par with the canon of the liberal arts. However, in the *Anticlaudianus*,<sup>14</sup> Alan described the seven liberal arts in detail according to a consistent pattern: portrait, attributes, the authors of antiquity corresponding to each art and embroidered on their garments, and the role of each art in construction of a chariot in which Prudence is to ascend to heaven. We shall return to this episode, but it suffices to note now that again Christine might echo a few details, for example the use of dialectic to combat vice, the characteristics of music, but Alan himself here probably echoes Martianus Capella and Boethius.<sup>15</sup>

Despite extensive research, I have not yet discovered a single source for this passage, although the relation between philosophy and theology is a perpetual theme. Aristotle stated the pre-eminence of the speculative sciences and the supremacy of theology over the other speculative sciences.<sup>16</sup> The question of the difference between knowledge of philosophy and divine wisdom was pursued by Augustine, Boethius and Cassiodorus, who in the twelfth century influenced the thought of Hugh of St-Victor. He saw theology as 'the peak of philosophy and the perfection of truth',<sup>17</sup> and considered the seven interdependent liberal arts, together with physics,

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<sup>12</sup> *Mutacion de Fortune*, II, p. 352.

<sup>13</sup> Alan of Lille, *Regulae de sacra theologia*, in PL 210, col. 621.

<sup>14</sup> *Anticlaudianus*, ed. by R. Bossuat (Paris: Vrin, 1955), II. 363–IV. 69 and p. 27; G. Raynaud de Lage, *Alain de Lille, poète du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Montreal: Institut d'Etudes médiévales and Paris: Vrin, 1951), pp. 53–54.

<sup>15</sup> *Anticlaudianus*, p. 102, note on v. 437.

<sup>16</sup> Aristotle, *The Metaphysics, Books I–IX*, VI. I. 10–11, trans. by H. Tredennick (London: Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), p. 297.

<sup>17</sup> *The 'Didascalicon' of Hugh of St. Victor. A Medieval Guide to the Arts*, trans. and ed. by J. Taylor (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 35 and p. 173, notes 171, 173; see also pp. 62–63 (II. 2 of the text) and p. 197, notes 15, 16.



required for interpretation of Scripture.<sup>18</sup> In the thirteenth century Bonaventure, who perceived that *all* the arts must be led back to theology by being connected under and with it and that God's wisdom lies hidden in all knowledge, all experience, all nature, concluded his treatise with the thought that all the divisions of knowledge are servants of theology: 'omnes cognitiones famulantur theologiae'.<sup>19</sup> Although Christine de Pizan adapted borrowed material for her own purposes—and indeed she stated at the beginning of the interpolation on philosophy: 'Rien du mien n'y adjousteray' (v. 7202)—exact identification of her source material for this passage (vv. 7309–7456) still evades us. In explicitly connecting the seven liberal arts with theology, she overcame the long-standing divide between philosophy and theology.

Christine introduces the subjects of her third division, *mathematique*, and describes each of them in separate sections with detail consistently derived firstly from Brunetto Latini's definition and then amplified, as Solente signalled, with material selected predominantly from Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, and, in most cases, from the beginning of chapters. The etymology of terms interested Christine little, it seems, *geometrie* being the only quadrivium term thus explained (vv. 7623–29; *Etymologiae* III. x. 3). The four quadrivium subjects are described along the same lines, as the description of music illustrates. It begins with adaptation of Brunetto Latini's definition (I. 3. 6. 34–37; p. 20):

La seconde si est Musique,  
Qui nous enseigne et nous applique  
A faire gracieuses voix  
En instrumens et haulx et coys,  
Et chanter mesurement,  
Chant d'eglise arreement  
Sonner en orgues par doulx son,  
Ou instrumens d'autre façon. (vv. 7545–552)

[The second is Music, which teaches and directs us to make pleasant sounds on both loud and quiet instruments and to sing with moderation, and appropriately to play church music on the sweet-sounding organ or instruments of another kind.]

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<sup>18</sup> *Didascalicon*, III. 4, pp. 88–89.

<sup>19</sup> *St. Bonaventure's On the Reduction of the Arts to Theology*, trans. and ed. by Z. Hayes (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University, 1996), pp. 33–34, 60–61 (section 26); see also pp. 1–2, 22. Compare Saint Thomas Aquinas, 'theologia debet omnibus aliis scientiis imperare et uti his quae in eis traduntur' (I *Sent.*, Prol., I. 1. Solut., 1874–89, VII, p. 5b), quoted in *Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. by A. Kenny, N. Kretzmann and J. Pinborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 454, note 55. In the *Summa Theologiae*, he attributed to the other sciences a subsidiary and ancillary role, theoretical and practical, supporting holy teaching, 'sacra doctrina' (*Summa Theologiae*, ed. by T. C. O'Brien (London: Blackfriars, 1964), II, Ia. 1, 5 (pp. 16–19).

His statement that music-making is ‘por delit des gens, u en eglise par le service Nostre Signeur’ (lines 36–37) has been somewhat compressed. Then follows from the *Etymologiae* a sketch of the history of music from the muses, Tubal-cain, perpetuating the error in *Etymologiae* manuscripts of the confusion of Tubal, blacksmith son of Cain, with his brother Yubal (Jubal) who invented harp and organ (Genesis 4. 21–22), and Pythagoras. Following Isidore’s line of thought (*Etymologiae*, III. xv. 2–xvii. 3), Christine evoked music as public expression of feeling, world harmony, stimulus of combative spirit, as well as a comforting and soothing force, such as David created on his harp to quell Saul, or such as attracts birds and animals and quietens the storm (vv. 7553–94). She stopped, however, when she reached Isidore’s division of music into three parts (harmony, rhythm, and metre), namely the technical and numerical aspects. In general, she selected what interested her as shows in her account of astronomy (vv. 7673–7720). In this instance she added to the essence of Brunetto Latini’s definition, Isidore’s distinction between astronomy and astrology (III. xxvii. 1–2), then returned to the beginning of his chapter not for his neat definition of astronomy, but for Josephus’s attribution of the discovery of astrology to Abraham and the Chaldaeans’ subsequent use of it. Christine, however, reversed the order of statements given by Isidore who correctly acknowledged the Chaldaeans as the first teachers of astrology, Abraham having transmitted the knowledge to the Egyptians.<sup>20</sup>

The practical subjects, which constitute moral philosophy, ethics, economics, and politics, form the:

[...] science seconde  
De Philosophie joconde,  
Qui nous enseigne ce qu’on doit  
Faire et ce que faire ne loit. (vv. 7721–24)

[...[the] second science of joyous Philosophy, which teaches us what must be done and what it is not permissible to do.]

Although no doubt derived from Brunetto Latini’s *Tresor*, the definitions correspond also to those of Hugh of St-Victor<sup>21</sup> and of William of Conches’s commentary on philosophy’s gown in the *Consolatio philosophiae* and perpetuated in the French

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<sup>20</sup> Compare Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* I. 164–169, in *Josephus in Nine Volumes*, ed. by H. St. J. Thackeray (London: Heinemann; Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1957), IV, pp. 82–83. In Egypt Abraham instructed the Egyptians, introducing them to arithmetic and the laws of astronomy. Josephus comments that these sciences thus travelled from the Chaldaeans to Egypt, whence they passed to the Greeks. A footnote alludes to a second-century BC statement that Abraham taught the Egyptians astrology. The terms for astronomy and astrology were still confused in the sixteenth century.

<sup>21</sup> See Janet Coleman, *A History of Political Thought. From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, p. 51.

translation *Le Livre de Boece de consolacion*.<sup>22</sup> Ethics is how to discipline oneself, how to live well; economics how to control one's household, family, possessions and educate one's children; and politics how to govern a country and its people in war and in peace, with justice and reason. While much might be said about the meaning of all three terms, I shall restrict my comments to *politique* (vv. 7775–784). Christine de Pizan has taken the term and its definition from the context where it is first attested in French and where Brunetto Latini defines it: '[...] et sans faille c'est la plus haute science et dou plus noble mestier ki soit entre les homes, car ele nous enseigne gouverner les estranges gens d'un regne et d'une vile, un peuple et une comune en tens de pes et de guerre, selonc raison et selonc justice' (I. 4. 5; p. 21) [...] and certainly it is the highest science and concerns the most noble office there is among humans, for it teaches us to govern foreign inhabitants of a kingdom or a town, a people and a community, in times of peace and war, in accordance with reason and justice]. It is superior to other disciplines, and practised for the good of the people by means of just, reasonable government.<sup>23</sup> Inherent in practical wisdom as thus defined is the need for discipline and organisation in order to achieve individual virtue and moral behaviour, or household efficiency and well being, or good government. Sylvie Lefèvre<sup>24</sup> and Kate Langdon Forhan<sup>25</sup> have shown ways in which Christine had assimilated Aristotle's thought and political language via Nicole Oresme's translations of Aristotle's treatises on these subjects, not that she drew on that source in her brief sketches here.

Linked somewhat tenuously to *politique*, or perhaps really to all three of the practical arts, by their pertinence to the human person, comes a further division, the *ars et mestiers*, in two groups: *oeuvre* and *parole*. The latter is of important interest,

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<sup>22</sup> *Glosae super Boetium*, I, prose 1, ll. 297–302 (p. 30). From our unpublished edition of *Le Livre de Boece de consolacion*, based on MS Auckland, Central City Library, Grey 119, fol. 13<sup>v</sup>: 'La pratique est devisee en trois, en yconomique qui enseigne a gouverner soy et sa mesgnée, et en politique qui enseigne a gouverner les citez et les choses communes et en ethique qui enseigne des meurs'.

<sup>23</sup> Compare 'la justice des gens, laquelle est dicte politique', in *Maistre Nicole Oresme, Le Livre de politiques d'Aristote*, I. 3. 1, ed. by A. D. Menut, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, 60, 1 (Philadelphia, 1970), p. 100. In Oresme's explanation of terms, we find '*Policie* est l'ordenance du gouvernement de toute la communauté ou multitude civile. Et *policie* est l'ordre des princeys ou offices publiques. Et est dit de *polis* en grec, qu'est multitude ou cité' (*ibid.*, p. 373). *Econome*, *Economie* etc is listed among the neologisms (p. 378). Compare also Brunetto Latini, *Le Tresor*, II. 49, p. 223; III. 73, pp. 391–92.

<sup>24</sup> Sylvie Lefèvre, 'Christine de Pizan et l'Aristote oresmien', *Au champ des escriptures. III<sup>e</sup> Colloque international sur Christine de Pizan*, ed. by E. Hicks and others (Paris: Champion, 2000), pp. 231–50.

<sup>25</sup> Kate Langdon Forhan, 'Reading backward: Aristotelianism in the Political Thought of Christine de Pizan', in *Au champ des escriptures*, pp. 359–81 and *The Political Theory of Christine de Pizan* (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 2002).

as it consists of the trivium: grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric. Grammar, which teaches us how to speak, read and write, is the foundation of the other two. Christine de Pizan now begins to name her authorities,<sup>26</sup> other than Brunetto Latini whose definitions continue nonetheless to be her point of departure. Quintilian, Varro, and Cicero also add weight. Let us focus on the section on *dyaletique*, where Christine has departed from the model of Brunetto Latini more seriously than Solente realized.<sup>27</sup> She perceived only that Christine had described logic before rhetoric, a change of order. In fact, Christine incorporated in the description of *dyaletique* a passage on *logique* from a separate division in Brunetto Latini's model. He divided philosophy into three sciences: *theorique*, *pratique*, and *logique*, the third of these teaching how to prove and show the reason why one must do some things and not others, why what is proposed is true. *Logique* has three parts: *dialetique*, *fidique*, *sophistique* (l. 5. 1; p. 22) which Christine faithfully defined within her section on dialectic (vv. 7901–936). She then completed her description with material from the *Etymologiae*, including the image of the closed fist and the open palm to distinguish dialectic and rhetoric, the former holding words together, the latter dispersing them (vv. 7937–952).<sup>28</sup> By this modification of Brunetto Latini's model, which I suspect Christine did not anticipate at the beginning—to judge by her insistence on ‘.III. membres principaulx notables / De sciences tres enseignables’ (vv. 7269–270)—she has subsumed logic under dialectic. In the thirteenth century, as part of the impact of Aristotelianism, the trivium focused on logic and the classification of the different subjects on the basis of the degree of certainty achieved in different kinds of argument, study of grammar concentrated on the logical aspects of language and rhetoric was taught for its practical usefulness in the moral sciences.<sup>29</sup>

Let us draw some conclusions on the interpolation. Christine de Pizan has described philosophy as an overarching entity to which the seven liberal arts, theology, and other practical arts belong. She wrote for lay readers, not scholars, selecting what she considered interesting and relevant to definition of the subjects. She used two main written sources: in French, Brunetto Latini's *Tresor*, and in Latin, Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*. Both these authors began their encyclopaedic work with systematic description of philosophy and the liberal arts. In like manner, before beginning her universal history, Christine interpolated her description, which is in the main conservative, derivative, and eclectic. She imitated Brunetto Latini's organizational framework, with two modifications: she introduced a lengthy description of theology which other disciplines must serve, just as they traditionally

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<sup>26</sup> For example, ‘Et, a ce propos, diray ore / Ce que nous en dit Ysidore, / En son premier livre acceptable / D’*Ethimologies* notable: / “Que celle est science et escole / De parler par droicte parolle [...]” (vv. 7811–16).

<sup>27</sup> *Mutacion de Fortune*, I, p. li, n. 1.

<sup>28</sup> *Etymologiae*, II. xxiii. 2, 1–3. Christine de Pizan attributes the comparison to Varro.

<sup>29</sup> See Coleman, *From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, pp. 62–63.

serve philosophy, and she omitted his third division, logic, transferring its essential content to dialectic, within the trivium. The implications of the first of these modifications interest us further. Can we see here an attempt to equalize philosophy and theology? We turn now to the second work, *Le Livre de l'advison Cristine*.

In *L'Advison*, the protagonist Cristine encounters in turn three feminine figures: Libera, who evokes the spectacle of strife-torn France and gives Cristine a mission, Opinion who considers her role to have been essential in the discovery of philosophy, the arts and sciences, and Philosophie who identifies herself immediately as the same figure who appeared to Boethius.<sup>30</sup> Cristine listens to the first two, and both talks and listens to Philosophie. At the beginning of Part II, having been charged by Libera to make the royal princes see reason and save France, Cristine reaches Paris, a second Athens, and enters the university where scholars of different disciplines engage in debate. Each of them has around their head one or more shadows of different colours and shapes. While they actively argue, only the shadow of the colour appropriate to the subject of the argument is visible, with varying nuances, and most seem as though transparent. When the shades of colour around two parties become identical, agreement has been reached in the argument. It is a wonderful sight. Colour coding distinguishes the sciences: grammar—green, dialectic—reddish-brown, arithmetic—variegated, music—white, geometry—vermillion, astrology—blue, theology—gold, philosophy—crystalline, ‘et ainsi des autres sciences liberaulx et deffendues’ (II. ii. 9–14; p. 53), which must include rhetoric, the only subject of the canon not specifically mentioned. While philosophy and theology both appear to sparkle, it is to philosophy that, resembling beautiful, fragrant flowers, the other arts and sciences pertain: ‘Celles qui appartenoient a philosophie estoient comme fleurs de diverses façons et couleurs. Mais tant estoient de grant odeur et beauté que toutes les escoles en resplendissoient, si que grant

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<sup>30</sup> Previous study of Christine de Pizan's use of Boethius's *Consolatio philosophiae* in *L'Advison* include: Glynnis M. Cropp, 'Boèce et Christine de Pizan', *Le Moyen Age*, 87 (1981), 387–417 (pp. 398–409); Joël Blanchard, 'Artéfact littéraire et problématisation morale au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Moyen Français*, 17 (1985), 1–47 (pp. 11–27), and 'Christine de Pizan: les raisons de l'histoire', *Le Moyen Age*, 92 (1986), 417–36 (pp. 425–35); Benjamin Semple, 'The Consolation of a Woman Writer: Christine de Pizan's Use of Boethius in *L'advison-Christine*', in *Women, the Book and the Worldly*, Selected Proceedings of the St Hilda's Conference, 1993, ed. by Lesley Smith and Jane H. M. Taylor, 2 vols (Cambridge: Brewer, 1995), II, pp. 39–48, and 'The Critique of Knowledge as Power: The Limits of Philosophy and Theology in Christine de Pizan', in *Christine de Pizan and the Categories of Difference*, ed. by Marilyn Desmond (Minneapolis-London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), pp. 108–27; Anne Paupert, "'La narracion de mes aventures", des premiers poèmes à *L'Advison*: l'élaboration d'une écriture autobiographique dans l'oeuvre de Christine de Pizan', in *Au champ des escriptures*, pp. 51–71, and 'Christine et Boèce. De la lecture à l'écriture, de la réécriture à l'écriture du moi', in *Contexts and Continuities. Proceedings of the IV<sup>th</sup> International Colloquium on Christine de Pizan*, ed. by A. J. Kennedy and others, 3 vols (Glasgow: Glasgow University Press, 2002), III, pp. 645–62.

beauté d'y estre estoit' (lines 38–41; pp. 53–54) [Those which belonged to philosophy were like flowers of different types and colours. But they were of such great fragrance and beauty that all the schools were resplendent, so that it was very beautiful to be present there]. Other shadows, extending outside the schools and across the world, represent the practical arts used by soldiers and knights. The persona Cristine admits that on the one hand she seems to understand this spectrum of knowledge, and on the other she is amazed and puzzled that she can perceive unity in the diversity of shadows ('n'estoit ce que l'ymage d'une toute seule ombre en laquelle toutes se refrappoient' (lines 49–50; p. 54) [it was just the image of a single shadow in which all [the shadows] converged]. In this kaleidoscope of moving colours and shapes Christine de Pizan, author, has with unusually bright vision combined erudition and imagination in order to describe universal learning. Philosophy is highlighted but does not here have the unifying role, which is traditionally hers.

Daughter of *Ignorance* and *Desir de savoir*, born soon after Adam, Dame Opinion, who is a disturbing force as well as an essential player in the discovery of philosophy, explains to Cristine: 'ne nom de philosophie oncques trouvé n'eust esté se je ne fusse, [...]. Et non obstant que Philosophie avec ses filles fust avant que moy et que fille de Dieu soit, si fus je faicte aussi tost que créé fu entendement humain' (II. iii. 24–28; p. 55) [and the name of philosophy would never have been found if I did not exist, [...] And notwithstanding that Philosophy with her daughters existed before me and that she is God's daughter, I was formed as soon as human understanding was created]. She is Philosophy's servant in this world (lines 29–30), acting as intermediary between those with clear understanding and her mistress. She is found in the schools among scholars of all disciplines; she spreads uncertainty, playing with opposites in a seemingly irrational way, stirring up controversy. Greater understanding and the wisdom of experience help determine how reliable Opinion is (II. iv. 43–48; pp. 56–57). She gives examples of her power: she caused Mahomet to discover 'la fausse loy' (II. v. 28–30; p. 58) and ancient philosophers to make mistakes (II. viii. 1–10; pp. 64–65; II. xiii. 1–5; p. 74). In her view, she maintains a neutral political attitude in the midst of current disputes about power (II. xvii. 18–36; p. 80) and yet she is the cause of disputes among philosophers and others. Nevertheless she asserts that she helps achieve truth by means of study and understanding (II. xxi. 12–16; p. 87). Dame Opinion finally declares that the sciences are at present not esteemed, are 'hors saison' (II. xxii. 65–66; p. 89), but there will one day be a prince who appreciates Cristine's writing, albeit after her lifetime, so she must continue to write. However, Cristine draws a philosophical conclusion based on her knowledge of practice, of the way philosophers in their arguments join together premises that are uncertain and arrive at a conclusion which is merely opinion. Thus because of human ignorance the world is more governed by opinion than by knowledge (lines 80–85; p. 90).

The third part of *L'Advison* contains Cristine's encounter with the person of Philosophie. Instead of a dialogue, such as Boethius and Philosophia had, the text

consists mainly of two monologues, with a momentary pause in the second monologue when Philosophie asks Cristine a question. The monologues are framed by the initial account of Cristine's arrival and the surprise of discovery and by the final section in which Cristine has the right of reply and conclusion. In turn, Cristine and Philosophie have both the vocal role of speaker and the silent role of active listener. In turn, they direct their thoughts to their interlocutor, whose external presence affects and shapes what is said. Both argue for the validity of their position or perspective, but Philosophie speaks to change Cristine's thinking and to affirm authority. By complaining about her life and explaining her efforts to overcome the adversities Fortune caused, as well as her escape into private study and writing, Cristine seeks sympathy, understanding, and help. Philosophie, however, remonstrates, rebutting Cristine's lament on misfortune and promising to show her 'le vray de ton fait' (III. xv. 34; p. 118); she reasons accordingly with quotation of authorities and examples.

The first chapter, which provides the context, has the effect of a revelation. Philosophia, who appeared to Boethius in his place of detention without ceremony or drama, was distinguished by certain recognizable features. After a difficult ascent with glimpses of beauty and the offer of wealth by her guide, who is 'la secretaire de Philosophie, abesse et superieure d'icellui couvent' (III. i. 19–20; p. 92) [the sacristan of Philosophy, abbess and superior of this convent], Cristine reached a classroom or study which is light and bright, with splendid wall-paintings of 'toutes sciences et leurs dependences' (lines 32–33) [all the sciences and their branches of learning]. She goes to an inner, ivory door through which she heard women's voices. When it opened, amazed, awed, blinded by the bright light, she faints only to be aroused by a sweet voice 'Mon ancelle tres loyale, lieve sus et ne t'espoventes, car l'amour que as a moy et le desir qui te maine en suppleant ton ignorance te sera valable' (lines 59–61; p. 93) [My very loyal handmaid, stand up and do not be afraid, as your love for me and the desire which drives you to remedy your ignorance will help you]. Cristine can distinguish only that nine ladies, like stars, surround a central sphere of light. When she has humbly returned the greeting, the voice identifies herself: '[...] je suis celle qui nuement et visiblement s'apparu ou temps de l'exil et de sa tribulacion a mon chier amé filz Bouece le tres souffisant philosophe, le quel par mes confors je garday de mort et de langueur desesperee' (lines 82–85; p. 94) [I am the one who in person visibly appeared at the time of his exile and tribulation to my dearly beloved son Boethius, the very worthy philosopher, whom by my consolation I protected from death and the inertia of despair]. Although Philosophie acknowledges her consoling function, her relationship with Cristine will be different from that with Boethius. Addressed as 'Mon ancelle' [My handmaid], 'Ma meschinete' (line 80) [My young servant], Cristine humbles herself reverently before the one she calls 'ma venerable maistresse' (line 79) [my venerable mistress], 'la tres venerable deesse' (III, ii, line 1; p. 94) [very venerable goddess], 'O tres glorieuse Sapience, de laquelle toutes congnoissances dependent' (lines 4–5) [O very glorious

Wisdom on whom all knowledge depends], to whom she looks for care at the end of this journey, where God the Holy Spirit has led her.

In Alan of Lille's *Anticlaudianus* is a possible precedent for this encounter. After their detailed description, the seven liberal arts build a chariot to carry Prudence on a mission to God, to ask for his help in their creation of a perfect human being. The chariot transports Prudence as far as possible, then is abandoned in heaven. A young girl wearing a coronet and carrying a book in her right hand, a sceptre in her left, then guides Prudence upwards to paradise. She is identified only as 'regina poli' [queen of the skies].<sup>31</sup> Approaching the divine, Prudence is dazzled by the light, faints, is revived by Faith who gives her a potion and a mirror to reduce the glare as she leads her into God's presence to accomplish her mission. The similarities are the journey of ascent, the limited scope of the liberal arts, the dazzling light, the overwhelming weakness and loss of consciousness. Although Alan of Lille did not identify the 'regina poli', scholars have maintained that she represents Theologia, which penetrates the mysteries of the revelation and truths beyond reason. There is no certainty, but Robert Bossuat was confident enough to use the term Theologia in running headings in this part of his edition of the text.<sup>32</sup>

In Cristine's lament the author has loaded on to her protagonist the weight of her misfortune, providing a fairly detailed autobiography. Let us note just one aspect of it. Cristine declares that in her youth she ignored 'les .II. beaulx conduis de philosophie' (III. ix. 7; p. 108) [the two beautiful sources of philosophy], the theoretical and practical, and disregarded the scholars around her, but now she strongly desires to learn 'l'art de toy, Philosophie ma mie, science' (lines 23–24; p. 109) [your art, Philosophy my friend, knowledge]. She has perceived the truth of Aristotle's principle that the educated person has natural superiority and power over the person who is ignorant, that is that knowledge is a means of gaining status and power (lines 35–42; p. 109). Hence she withdrew from other activity in order to read history and poetry, first of all, to follow the urge to write which Nature gave her, to devote herself to 'ma vie speculative et solitaire' (III. xi. 4; p. 111) [my solitary life of study], even though she cannot keep hostile Fortune entirely at bay. So, she appeals to the higher being, Philosophie, whose role interests us most.

In the *Consolatio*, Philosophia invites Boethius to reveal his predicament and suffering, which he does in an account of his public life and the false charges laid against him. Philosophia replies gently and firmly, proposing another perspective and stressing that her focus is on his mind, the seat of his thought and knowledge of

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<sup>31</sup> *Anticlaudianus*, v, 40–305. For example, 'O regina poli, celi dea, filia summi / Artificis, [...]' (v. 178); compare v. 243 and see p. 29. Compare also de Lage, *Alain de Lille*, p. 55. Christine de Pizan had already used the concept of ascent in *Le Livre du chemin de long estude*, where the Sibyl leads her up into heaven by a ladder, in order to view the world (v. 1569 et seq.). Martianus Capella held that the liberal arts can elevate the soul to be fit for heaven (Minnis and Scott, *Medieval Literary Theory*, pp. 124–25).

<sup>32</sup> *Anticlaudianus*, pp. 127–29.



her truth. She will give him valid remedies (I, pr. 5). She begins the process by questioning him on certain fundamental ideas (I, pr. 6). In *L'Advision*, Philosophie smiles a little ambiguously when Cristine finishes her long monologue, and replies respectfully, emphasizing that Cristine is mistaken in attributing to misfortune what is God given. Philosophie will dispense suitable remedies, ones easier to digest than those offered to Boethius, who was by virtue of his education, public life and patrician status, a different patient from Cristine whose education has been private and self-determined and whose experience was personal. Philosophie's method will be: 'sus fondement de sainte Escripiture la plus seure te ramenray, se je puis, a vraie congnoissance de ton tort' (III. xv. 24–25; p. 117) [on the basis of totally reliable Holy Scripture I shall bring you back, if I can, to true recognition of your error].<sup>33</sup> Cristine must accept that events such as the death of Charles V are of God's determination which is unquestionable (lines 42–57) and not attributable to Fortune. She must learn that good comes from adversity, a strong line of argument in the *Consolatio* also. Philosophie reproaches Cristine for her naïveté, her ignorance of real trouble, her lack of endurance, and her feminine weakness, but relies on the strength of her Christian faith (III. xvi. 26–28; p. 119).

In Chapters xvi–xxvi Philosophie marshals her arguments, evoking firstly the example of Christians not only stripped of worldly goods, but also physically maimed, debilitated by illness, tormented, homeless, beggars whom no one pities. According to the Gospel teaching of the Beatitudes, they are blessed and come closest to Christ in this world. Philosophie reinforces her argument with Saint Augustine's comment on Psalm 21: God, as doctor, cures the sinner by inflicting tribulation in order to save the sinner, not to condemn, as God cares about the individual's health, not individual will (III. xvi). Here is the basic principle, supported by the teaching of the Bible and its interpretation by one of the Church Fathers.

Like Boethius's *Philosophia* (II, pr. 4), Philosophie reminds Cristine of her apparent lack of gratitude for what she has had and still has: her parents, her physical health, good temperament and understanding, her children. Good can be perceived also in her husband's death. Philosophie praises the good qualities of Cristine's family to persuade her to be thankful to 'cil dont tout bien vient' [he from whom all good comes] who thus provided for her 'de sa pure grace especiale' [his pure and individual grace] (III. xvii. 80–82; p. 122), and to hope that by the prayers of others she will attain paradise (lines 84–87). Cristine must realize that the experience of adversity is more valuable than increased prosperity (lines 33–69). She must rise above the tribulations of this world and, like Boethius, look upwards, towards what is for 'l'ame formee a l'image de Dieu' [soul formed in the image of God] (iii. xx. 46–48; p. 124) and God's children (lines 58–59) lasting paradise.

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<sup>33</sup> Compare III. xix. 18–22 (p. 125).

Philosophie's method is consistent in Chapters xix–xxvi. She relies on the authority of Christian teaching for her remedies: 'Or regarde les beaulx ensengnemens des sains docteurs, car de tel viande te vueil repaistre, comme elle soit plus penetrant par aventure en ton entendement que force de soubtilz argumens ne seroit, non obstant que autre fois en cas pareil usace en confort de creature humaine' (III. xix. 18–22; p. 125) [Now look at the fine teaching of the holy doctors, for I wish to nourish you with such food, as it will probably penetrate your understanding more deeply than would many subtle arguments, even though on another occasion in a similar case I used them to console a human being]. She applies this teaching vigorously in the proof of her arguments, although it consists of a lighter touch, milder medicine than she gave Boethius. She threatens Cristine with heresy if she fails to believe the Scriptures and theologians (III. xx. 46–48). Explicit reference to her consolation of Boethius appears: she repeats what she said to him: 'quant je dis a mon amé Bouece [...]' (III. xxii. 24; p. 131) and quotes from the verse-prose translation of the *Consolatio*, *Le Livre de Boece de consolacion*, attributing to Boethius what are expressions of her own thought in his work.<sup>34</sup> In Chapters XXIII–XXVI support of her argument moves from the *Consolatio* to patristic and later theological writing which is quoted, as the editors have shown, from Thomas of Ireland, *Manipulus florum*, a thematically organized collection of quotations and sayings, composed in 1306.<sup>35</sup> She refers most frequently to Augustine, Gregory the Great, Jerome, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Hugh of St-Victor. In Chapter XXIII, for example, she has surrounded a passage from her dialogue with Boethius with nine quotations from Gregory, Chrysostom, Hugh of St-Victor, Ambrose, and Cassiodorus, most of which come from their biblical commentary. Short sentences bearing her argument connect the quotations, while rhetorical questions unify and reinforce it, creating an illusion of conversation, even though the interlocutor is silent. Christine de Pizan thus threaded together her material in a manner not unlike that of Jean Gerson in his sermons.

The themes of the argument, nevertheless, depend significantly on the *Consolatio*. Its general thrust is to show Cristine that she is not a victim of Fortune; her misfortune is in her mind or manner of thinking; God uses adversity to improve those He loves most; patience must be exercised; felicity lies within the person and not in worldly goods and honours, and true felicity is found only in God who is perfect good. Up to this point the argument coincides more or less with those of Books II–III of the *Consolatio philosophiae*. Whereas in Books IV and V Boethius and Philosophia discuss God's relationship with the world as figured in providence, destiny, chance, divine prescience and free will, Christine de Pizan's Philosophie

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<sup>34</sup> See the Introduction, pp. xxviii–xxxI and our article 'Boèce et Christine de Pizan', pp. 398–407. Compare also, Lori Walters, 'Boethius and the Triple Ending of the *Cent Balades*', *French Studies*, 50 (1996), 129–37.

<sup>35</sup> See the Introduction, pp. xxxiii–xxxiv and the references given in the Notes, pp. 184–93.

presents the joys of the heavenly kingdom as the promised reward and envisages the moment when the individual will see the face of God and the Holy Trinity:

Maiz veoir la benoite Trinité ainsi que elle est, c'est la vraie felicité seule et souveraine, et non autre, ou estre doit le terme et fin du desir de toute humaine creature; a laquelle felicité te vueille conduire celle benoite Trinité, un seul Dieu regnant ou siecle des siecles (III. xxvi. 72–75; p. 140).<sup>36</sup>

[But sight of the Holy Trinity as it is, is the one true and supreme felicity, and not other, where must lie the goal and end of the desire of every human being; to this felicity may you be led by the Holy Trinity, one God reigning for ever and ever.]

Christine de Pizan's *Philosophie* combined the instruction given to Boethius nine centuries earlier on the purpose and endurance of adversity and the quest for felicity with the Church's teaching on Holy Scripture, and reference to certain philosophers from antiquity, mainly Aristotle. Her authorities are not contemporary, in fact they are not more recent than the twelfth century. But we can perhaps discern some contemporary influence in her choice, particularly in the frequent reference to Saint Augustine. The penultimate paragraph of *Philosophie*'s discourse consists of a long quotation from a sermon defining the individual's relationship to God through the three persons of the Trinity and a life lived in accordance with the moral trinity of Faith, Hope and Charity, as Saint Augustine instructed in his treatise *De doctrina Christiana*<sup>37</sup> and as Jean Gerson expounded in the last part of his sermon *Vivat rex* [...] *Vive le roy*, dated 7 November 1405.<sup>38</sup>

How does Cristine respond to this teaching? She thanks *Philosophie* for both healing and reinvigoration, hailing her as 'l'armoire et corps de toutes sciences, lesquelles sont tes membres [...] Car tu es toutes sciences et a tes amez te demonstres telle qu'il te plaist selon la voie qu'ilz te vueillent enquerre' (III. xxvii, 7–11; p. 140) [the repository and body of all the sciences, which are your limbs [...] For you are all the sciences and to your loved ones you reveal yourself, as you please, according to the way in which they want to discover you]. Thus she revealed herself to Cristine as 'Sainte Theologie' (line 12), and by giving Cristine food from God's table she also reversed the role initially adumbrated for Cristine as *Philosophie*'s servant. Basing her thought on a passage from Saint Augustine's second letter to Volusianus, whom he was trying to convince about Christianity, Cristine then elaborates on the concept of *Philosophie*, the sum of all knowledge. Saint Augustine saw contained in Christ's commandment to love the Lord God with

<sup>36</sup> Contrary to the editors' note (*L'Advision*, p. 192), Christine has not summarized III, prose 12 of the *Consolatio philosophiae*, for Boethius does not refer to specific Christian doctrine in this work.

<sup>37</sup> Saint Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. and introd. by D. W. Robertson, Jr. (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1958), I. xxxv–xl. 39–44 (pp. 30–33).

<sup>38</sup> Jean Gerson, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by P. Glorieux, 10 vols (Paris: Desclée, 1960–73), VII/2, no. 398, pp. 1137–83.

all your heart, soul and mind and to love your neighbour as yourself all philosophy, which he defined as physics, ethics, and logic and to which he added the idea of security of the *res publica* founded with the bond of faith and concord on love of God and love of one another.<sup>39</sup> The development of her thought reflects Saint Augustine's argument, as she contemplates Philosophie as theology, ethics, logic, and politics, introducing the term *politique* to Saint Augustine's trio. All these disciplines contribute to the right conduct of life centred on God and Christian doctrine.

It is Philosophie as Theologie, embodying truth, wisdom, and felicity (lines 30–34), which Cristine has chosen as her way. She then praises theology, reinforcing her own tributes with quotations from Augustine, Gregory, and Jerome, all culled, it seems, from the section *Scriptura sacra* in the *Manipulus*. She acknowledges she has overcome ignorance of her lack of knowledge and her error, and thanks the one she now addresses as 'Sainte Theologie et divinité' (lines 68–69) for this manna from heaven. The response to Cristine's plaintive personal monologue is Philosophie's authoritative sermon on how to live a life centred on God and his sovereignty in knowledge of the Christian truth, as revealed and taught for many centuries. Having listened attentively and assimilated the lesson, Cristine would be able to enter into proper dialogue with Philosophie, as the final section indicates.

As a postscript, a brief comment on the author's conclusion. Christine de Pizan perhaps imitated either Brunetto Latini's comparison of the three parts of his *Tresor* to cash, precious stones, and gold, or, more particularly, the beginning of the second part of his work where he equates the four virtues he is about to explain with four precious stones: ruby, sapphire, diamond, and emerald.<sup>40</sup> Christine de Pizan compared the three parts of *L'Advision* to diamond, cameo (the popular term for sardonyx<sup>41</sup>), and ruby, perhaps reflecting contemporary jewellery fashion at the Franco-Burgundian court. All three stones are defined in Isidore's *Etymologiae*<sup>42</sup> and are listed in most lapidaries.<sup>43</sup> Although only diamond and ruby are associated with

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<sup>39</sup> Letter 137 (412AD), in *The Letters of Saint Augustine*, 2 vols, II, 176–94 (p. 192), in *The Works of Aurelius Augustine, Bishop of Hippo*, trans. and ed. by M. Dods, 15 vols (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1872–76). At the beginning of the note in *L'Advision* (p. 192), erroneous attribution is given to the *De doctrina Christiana*.

<sup>40</sup> *Le Tresor*, I. 1. 1, 3 and 4 (p. 17) and II. 1 (p. 175).

<sup>41</sup> Charles Du Cange, *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis* (Paris: Didot, 1883–87), II, 38.

<sup>42</sup> *Etymologiae*: *adamus* XVI. xiii. 2–3; *sardonyx* XVI. viii. 4 and xv. 27; *carbunculus* XVI. xiv. 1.

<sup>43</sup> P. Studer and J. Evans, *Anglo-Norman Lapidaries* (Paris: Champion, 1924). For example, the first French version of Marbod, vv. 47–88, 267–82, 519–24, and its Anglo-Norman adaptation, vv. 59–102, 531–46, 547–59.

Nature in Alan of Lille's *De planctu naturae*,<sup>44</sup> all three stones are included in his *Distinctiones dictionum theologicarum*.<sup>45</sup> Properties attributed to the stones vary a little, but constant meanings are the diamond's hardness and resistance to all other force, the combination of colours in the cameo, which can be artificial, and the brilliance of the ruby, sometimes figuring the light of Christ. Perhaps they evoke here political strength, diversity of ideas within intellectual unity, and spiritual light.

We have attempted to show Christine de Pizan's representation of philosophy in two works written about two years apart. In *La Mutacion* philosophy is defined and divided in a traditional way, the essence of which is that philosophy is the sum of all knowledge. Notwithstanding, she envisaged the canon of the liberal arts as not only belonging to Philosophy—the conventional notion which Eustache Deschamps gently derided in a ballade<sup>46</sup>—but also serving Theology. In *L'Advisioun*, although the disciplines of the liberal arts have their place in education, Philosophy appears in person to advise the protagonist Cristine on how to surmount the tribulations of her life and play an effective role in the recovery of the society to which she belongs. Whereas Boethius's *Philosophia* consoled a philosopher-statesman, who had been falsely accused and sentenced to death, at a time when Christianity was threatened by paganism, and civil order and freedom were subject to tyranny, Christine de Pizan's *Philosophie* draws on the intervening centuries of Christian thought and interpretation of Holy Scripture to reinforce her argument, to identify fully with one of her constituent members, Theologie, in order to remind Cristine of God's truth and grace which guide the Christian way of life and pertain also to ethics, logic, and politics. Thus Christine de Pizan conceived and expressed the concord of philosophy rooted in the wisdom of classical antiquity and theology based on the truth of the Bible and the teaching of the Church.

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<sup>44</sup> *Anglo-Latin Satirical Poets and Epigrammatists*, ed. by T. Wright, 2 vols (London, 1872; repr. Wiesbaden: Kraus, 1964), II, p. 436. See Saint Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, I. xvi. 24 (p. 51) on the association of the carbuncle (ruby) and diamond with knowledge.

<sup>45</sup> PL 210, cols 692, 928, 935.

<sup>46</sup> 'Depuis l'aage qui commença premier', composed c. 1400 when millenarian thought was prevalent. Deschamps perceived arithmetic's victory over the other liberal arts in the contemporary increased power of money, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Queux de Saint-Hilaire and G. Raynaud, 11 vols (Paris: Didot, 1878–1903; repr. 1966); v, no. 979 (pp. 221–22).

Fig. 1: Philosophy and the Liberal Arts according to Christine de Pizan,  
*Le Livre de la mutacion de Fortune*

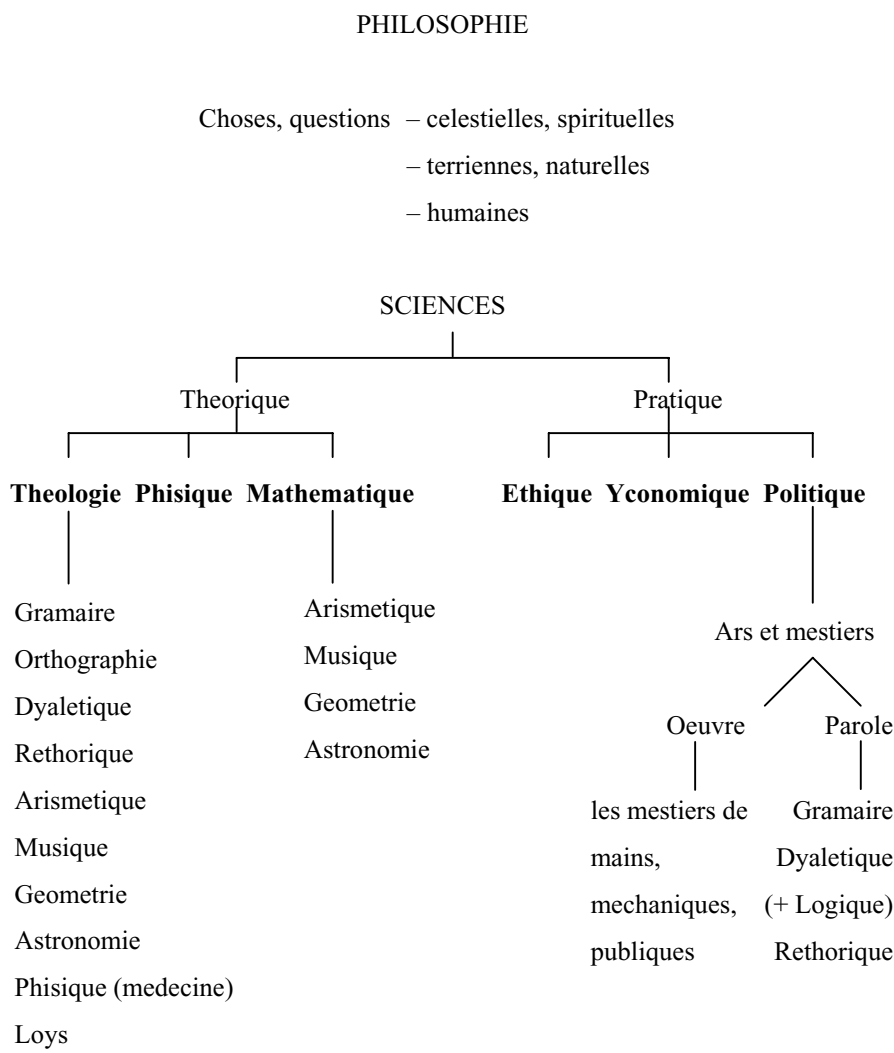
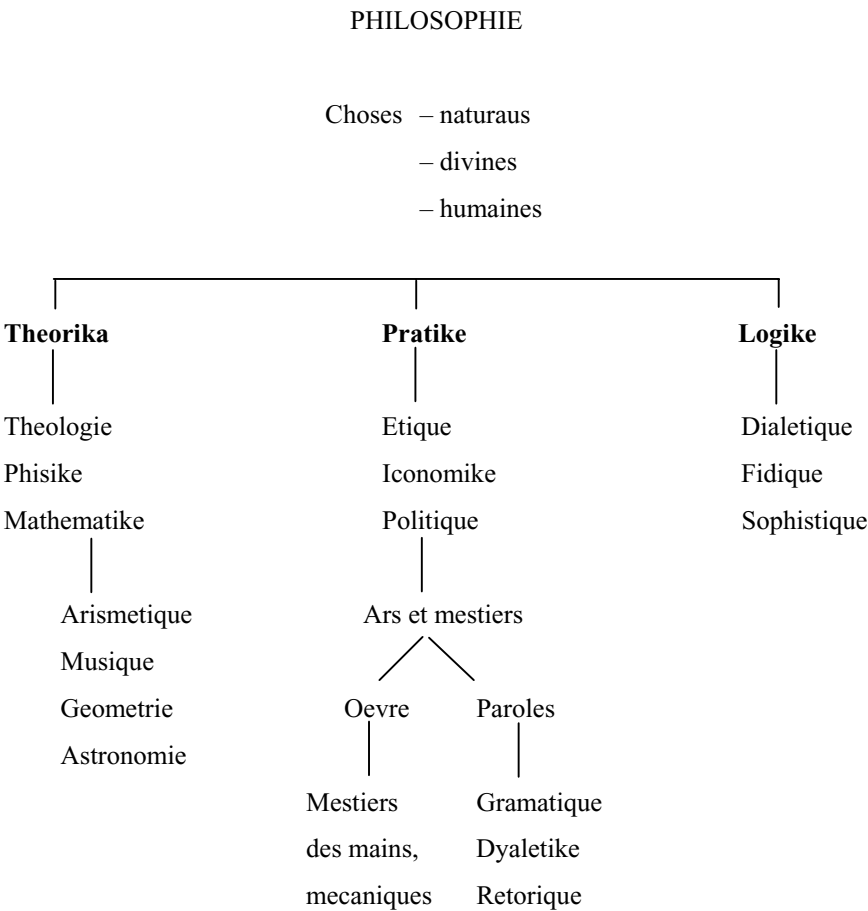


Fig. 2: Philosophy and the Liberal Arts according to Brunetto Latini,  
*Li Livres dou Tresor*







## Castles in the Air? The Prince as Conceptual Artist

JULIA SIMMS HOLDERNESS

Venetian by birth, Parisian by adoption, Christine de Pizan was a confirmed courtier for most of her life.<sup>1</sup> She reflected on courts and their surroundings (specifically on the architecture of what she calls variously ‘castle’ or ‘city’), in works such as the *Mutacion de Fortune*, the *Cité des dames*, and the *Fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*. Despite their author’s intimate connection with courtly life, these works reveal little about its day-to-day workings. But they do illuminate her project for her princely readers’ intellectual edification.

Christine envisions an Augustinian conversion from life in the castle of Dame Fortune to life in the City of Ladies. The first represents the tangible world of space and time—all men and women pass through it. The second is an intellectual refuge from that world—only the virtuous, and indeed, only virtuous ladies, may enter. Once inside, the inhabitants are eternally safe from the assaults of the outside world.

Whereas the Castle of Fortune is prefabricated and easy to enter, the City of Ladies must be built from the ground up, before anyone can move in. There are strong parallels between the construction of the City of Ladies by the fictional Christine and the public works undertaken in Paris by Charles V, known as ‘the Wise,’ which Christine the author details in her royal panegyric. She portrays both projects as artistic, a model for her readers who include the dukes of Burgundy and Charles VI, known as ‘the Mad.’ (The stakes of Christine’s educational project are high.) Christine’s vision of art and architecture is closer to the linear clarity of Le Corbusier and Mies Van Der Rohe than it is to the

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<sup>1</sup> My thanks to Tracy Adams, Ehsan Ahmed, Constant J. Mews, and John Rauk for their generous help with this article.

haphazard reality of much medieval architecture, the product of many successive additions and repairs. Christine's orderly architecture exists first and foremost in the mind. In the *Fais et bonnes meurs*, even real buildings such as the Louvre serve only to figure the wisdom of their builder-restorer. Drawing on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, as well as Aquinas's *Commentary* on that work, Christine treats architecture as the supreme art-form, and she insists that the king's theoretical knowledge of architecture is superior to the actual builders' practical knowledge—Charles, 'the wise artist', grasps the 'first causes' of the endeavour, as well as how to dispose of the endeavour's different elements. This type of knowledge translates elsewhere in the same work into a metaphor of compilation as architectural construction. The king's artistic creation signals his 'science'—literally, his knowledge—which will in turn help him to govern the nation.<sup>2</sup>

This inquiry will open with the Augustinian underpinnings of Christine's vision (including her notion of architecture as an ordering principle), then move to her comparison of architecture to the art of writing, and finally to her Thomistic portrait of the king as conceptual artist. I shall close with Christine's association of conceptual artistry with the virtue of prudence.

### *The Augustinian Underpinnings of Christine's Architecture*

Scholars have long recognized that Augustine's treatise on the City of God is one of the main sources for the *Cité des dames*. Christine may have read either the original Latin or the recent French translation by Raoul de Presles.<sup>3</sup> I would suggest that the *City of God* is also a source for the *Mutacion de Fortune*, and indeed that the two works of Christine are complementary: the *Cité des dames*, completed in 1405, is the natural conclusion to the *Mutacion de Fortune*, completed in 1403.

Building on Psalms 46 and 87, Augustine describes a glorious City of God which remains stable when all else (which he names the City of Man) is in tumult. He writes:

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<sup>2</sup> See Christine de Pizan, *Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 11, ed. by Solente, vol. II, pp. 33–41). Ever the efficient researcher, Christine focuses on the highly expository first few pages of her sources. See Saint Thomas Aquinas, *In duodecim libros metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio*, ed. by M. R. Cathala and R. M. Spiazzi (Turin: Marietti, 1950), I. 1 and *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, trans. by John P. Rowan and preface by Ralph McInerney (Notre Dame, Indiana: Dumb Ox Books, revised edition, 1995), I. 1, [subsequent references = *In duodecim libros* and *Commentary*].

<sup>3</sup> See Lori Walters, 'La réécriture de saint Augustin par Christine de Pizan: de *La Cité de Dieu* à *La Cité des dames*', in *Au champ des escriptures: III<sup>e</sup> colloque international sur Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Eric Hicks and others (Paris: Champion, 2000), pp. 197–215.

[I]n duo genera distribuimus [genus humanum], unum eorum qui secundum hominem, alterum eorum qui secundum Deum vivunt; quas etiam mystice appellamus civitates duas, hoc est duas societates hominum, quarum est una quae praedestinata est in aeternum regnare cum Deo, altera aeternum supplicium subire cum diabolo.

[I distinguish two branches of mankind: one made up of those who live according to man, the other of those who live according to God. I speak of these two branches allegorically as two cities, that is, two societies of human beings, of which one is predestined to reign eternally with God, and the other to undergo eternal punishment with the Devil.]<sup>4</sup>

According to Augustine, the City of Man descends from Cain and Ishmael, whereas the City of God descends from Abel and Isaac. Like the first-born sons Cain and Ishmael, the City of Man is the natural city after the Fall. Like the second-born sons Abel and Isaac, the City of God is created only afterwards. The opposition between Cain and Abel is clear. Augustine distinguishes between Ishmael and Isaac in a similar way: Ishmael was conceived ‘naturally’ out of wedlock, but Isaac was conceived lawfully within wedlock. For Augustine, this means that, ‘parit [...] cives terrenae civitatis peccato vitiata natura, caelestis vero civitatis cives parit a peccato naturam liberans gratia’ [the citizens of the earthly city are brought forth by nature, which is corrupted by sin, whereas the citizens of the heavenly city are brought forth by a grace which frees nature from sin].<sup>5</sup>

Like Augustine’s two cities, Christine’s Castle of Fortune and City of Ladies parallel the entire span of human history, each in its own way. People move in and out of Fortune’s Castle in a frantic cycle of life and death. The castle may last, but its residents do not. Once someone moves into the City of Ladies, she stays there. Moreover, by housing residents from all times and places together simultaneously, the City of Ladies mirrors the transcendence of history in the Heavenly City which it, as City of God, foreshadows.

### *From the City of Man to the Castle of Fortune*

Like Augustine’s City of Man, Christine’s Castle of Fortune has no visible architect, and it seems always to have existed. Its lack of planning is reflected in the untidiness of its design. Like a merry-go-round, the whole structure revolves constantly on a giant wheel; the wheel hangs from chains which themselves have no clear source of support:

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<sup>4</sup> Saint Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, Book xv, Chapter 1, pp. 410–12; *The City of God against the Pagans*, trans. by Philip Levine, vol. 4 of 7 (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1957–1972), [subsequent reference = *City of God*].

<sup>5</sup> *City of God*, xv. 2. I have slightly emended the translation.

III. chayennes soustiennent  
 Le lieu, ne sçay se elles tiennent  
 A quelque chose ou a noyant.<sup>6</sup>

[Four chains support  
 The place; I do not know if they are supported  
 By something or by nothing at all.<sup>7</sup>]

An accompanying miniature mirrors this design in the Duke of Berry's copy of the *Mutacion*.<sup>8</sup> The design is especially striking, since neither of the passage's other sources (the *Roman de la rose* and the *Panthère d'amours*) describes Fortune's castle or her island as floating. This is literally a castle in the air. And yet, it is the expression 'château en Espagne' which prevails in French.<sup>9</sup> Is it possible that Christine's image influenced English usage? Even if the resemblance is coincidental, the idea—of a vain and illusory hope—is the same.

This image finds a strange reflection in the *Fais et bonnes meurs*, and it merits a brief digression. Christine tells of having seen a tightrope walker so renowned for his grace and agility that he was called 'the Flying Man' ('le Voleur'). Ignoring the precarity of his situation, the Flying Man danced on a cord strung between Notre Dame and the palace, but one day he slipped and was dashed to pieces on the ground. When Charles V heard of the accident, he declared: 'Certes, c'est com impossible qu'à homs, qui de son sens, force, legiereté ou autre chose de soi trop presume, qu'au derrain ne lui en meschée' [Surely it is impossible that a man who presumes too much on his own sense, strength, agility, or any other quality, not suffer from it in the end]. This remark is meant to illustrate the king's wisdom. According to Christine, the Flying Man jeopardized not only his body, but also his soul ('ame et corps').<sup>10</sup> The slender tightrope could not bear the weight of the Flying Man's worldly ambition. Strung between those massive representatives of church and state, the cathedral and the palace, the tightrope is clearly another castle in the air.

If the location of Fortune's castle were not dizzying enough, half of the structure seems ready to topple from the pressure of the thrones. Tellingly, given

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<sup>6</sup> *Mutacion de Fortune*, vv. 1469–1471.

<sup>7</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, the translations in this article are my own.

<sup>8</sup> Paris, BnF fr. 603, fol. 91<sup>rb</sup>. Fortune and her brother Eur stand at the door of her castle, as a boat approaches. The boat floats in water, suggested by blue waves. But the island on which the castle rests is suspended in the air (blue with no waves) from mysteriously dangling chains.

<sup>9</sup> The expression appears as early as the *Roman de la rose*: 'Lors feras chastiaus en Espagne / Et avras joie de noiant' [Then you will build castles in Spain / And have joy from nothing]. Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Roman de la rose*, ed. by Félix Lecoy. (Paris: Champion, 1983), vv. 2430–2431.

<sup>10</sup> *Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 11 (vol. II, pp. 60–64, esp. p. 61).

Augustine's description of the natural origin of the City of Man, it is Dame Nature who keeps Fortune's castle from collapse.<sup>11</sup> This is a *natural* structure. All paths lead there: Christine lists them variously as the Path of Great Pride, the Path of Great Malice, the Path of Great Learning, and the Way to Paradise. Everyone (all estates of men and women, from all nations) enters the castle through one of three of the faces, which are governed by personifications of Wealth, Hope, and Poverty. Eventually, everyone exits from the fourth face, which is governed by Atropos, or Death.<sup>12</sup>

Like Augustine's City of Man, Fortune's castle is a mixed place. Even a virtue like Hope may be abused here. Many of her devotees hope for the wrong things, for material, rather than spiritual happiness. The Way to Paradise (distinguished semantically from the other paths by the term *voie*, in place of *chemin*) passes briefly through the upper reaches of Fortune's highest towers, and then leads beyond the castle entirely, up into heaven. Only this way can bypass Atropos. Unlike the other paths, the Way to Paradise leads not only *to* the castle, but *through* it. In its restless mobility, it suggests Augustine's notion of a *civitas peregrina*. According to Augustine, the City of God dwells within the City of Man, as an alien, a wayfarer.<sup>13</sup>

### *From the City of God to the City of Ladies*

In an allegorical sense, the *Voie de paradis* leads to the City of Ladies. The feeling of apartness which is so central to residence in the *civitas peregrina* is also central to residence in the City of Ladies.<sup>14</sup> The orderly construction of this City depends on the orderly refutation of common misconceptions.

The Field of Writings where the City is built is inside Christine's study, or, to use her word, 'cell': 'un jour comme je feusse en mon cele, environnee de

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<sup>11</sup> *Mutacion de Fortune*, vv. 2755–2759.

<sup>12</sup> Atropos is the third Fate, who snips off the thread of men's and women's lives. In the *Epistre Othea* (1400), Christine uses Atropos as a synonym for death: 'Les poetes appellerent la mort Atropos [...]'. See Christine de Pizan, *Epistre Othea*, Gloss 34 (p. 248). We might compare this version of human life with the tragicomic vision which will open the *Advison Cristine* a few years later: an automaton called Chaos swallows up human beings and then either spits or excretes them out again. See Julia Simms Holderness, 'Compilation, Commentary, and Conversation in Christine de Pizan', in *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 20 (2003), 47–55.

<sup>13</sup> *City of God*, xviii. 1.

<sup>14</sup> See Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (London: Faber, 1967), pp. 313–29, esp. pp. 323–24 and Jacqueline Cerquiglini, 'L'étrangère', *Revue des langues romanes*, 92.2 (1988), 239–51.

plusieurs volumes de diverses matieres'.<sup>15</sup> [One day as I was sitting in my study surrounded by books on all kinds of subjects<sup>16</sup>]. The term suggests monastic seclusion. Although Christine spent her prime very much in the world, she consistently portrayed herself as removed from it. The *incipits* of her more 'autobiographical' works almost always place her in her study, and so do the accompanying miniatures.<sup>17</sup> Christine's 'cell' also recalls the 'little grey cells', or to put it less anachronistically, the chambers of the mind: the City of Ladies is a state of mind.

But Christine's initial mental state is far from ideal, and her separation from the world is incomplete. Sitting in her study, surrounded by her books, she is the image of an intellectual—but what sort of intellectual? She restlessly seeks distraction from her task of reading and compiling weighty authors ('recueillir la pesanteur des sentences de divers auteurs'); she had rather relax by skimming through some light verse ('m'esbatre et regarder aucune joyeuseté des diz des poetes.') The book she does pick up is not her own; she describes it as 'estrange,' and seems unsure how it got into her study. Her choice for amusement, a book entitled *Lamentations*, is singularly odd. She accepts the book's venomous misogyny with absolute credulity.<sup>18</sup> Her lassitude before reading this book and her despair afterwards resemble medieval descriptions of the psychological distress encountered by some monks:

The gaze of the slothful man rests obsessively on the window, and with his fantasy, he imagines the image of someone who comes to visit him. At the squeak of the door, he leaps to his feet. He hears a voice, runs to face the window and looks out, and yet he does not descend to the street, but turns back to sit down where he was, torpid and as if dismayed. If he reads, he interrupts himself restlessly and, a minute later, slips into sleep.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Cité des dames*, I. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. by Earl Jeffrey Richards. (New York: Persea Books, 1982), I. 1 [subsequent reference = *City of Ladies*].

<sup>17</sup> The only exception to this is the *Dit de Poissy* which opens with the poet *en route* for a visit to her daughter, a nun at the Dominican convent of Poissy. She and her worldly companions find a measure of solace there. In 1418, when Burgundian incursions made Paris unsafe, Christine did retire to Poissy. It is a striking irony that Christine's real seclusion, which lasted until her death in about 1430, produced only two works, the *Heures de contemplacion sur la Passion de notre Seigneur* and the *Ditié de Jeanne d'Arc*. Christine may have found the allegorical City of Ladies, built out of history and ideas, more stimulating than the real one at Poissy, built out of stone.

<sup>18</sup> *Cité des dames*, I. 1.

<sup>19</sup> Sancti Nili, *De octo spiritibus malitiae*, Chapter 14, quoted in Giorgio Agamben, *Stanzas: Word and Phantasm in Western Culture*, trans. by Ronald L. Martinez (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993, originally published as *Stanze: La*

At this point, Christine is still very much a resident of Fortune's castle. She cannot focus on the philosophy which is her rightful task, and she takes at face value a diatribe which comes from she knows not where and which contradicts the teachings of her own experience. She feels alienation at this point, but it is not the sort of apartness necessary to build the City of Ladies.

In the *Advision Cristine*, composed in the same year as the *Cité*, Christine describes her eventual conversion of alienation into a more meditative solitude as a move away from Fortune's domain: 'Ha! Fortune, quel tresor tu me tollis! Tant me fis grant dommaige a mon entendement.'<sup>20</sup> [Oh Fortune, what a treasure you robbed from me! You did such great harm to my intelligence.] Her consolation begins when she chooses to isolate herself more thoroughly and devote herself to her studies: 'Adonc cloy mes portes, c'est assavoir mes sens, que plus ne fussent tant vagues aux choses foraines, et [...] happay ces beaulx livres et volumes et dis que aucune chose recouvreroie de mes pertes passees.'<sup>21</sup> [And so I closed my doors, that is to say, my senses, so that they were no longer susceptible to outside influences, and I took up those lovely books and declared that I would recover some of my earlier losses.] At this point she starts to read, and shortly after, to write; she portrays writing as a joyful birth from the womb of her memory. The *Cité des dames* is the product of this sort of abstraction. Christine's 'amour d'estude'<sup>22</sup> resembles the *joi d'amor* which, as Agamben reminds us, the troubadours enclosed in the *stanza*, literally, 'a capacious dwelling, receptacle', a place of safe-keeping.<sup>23</sup>

Dame Justice concludes the City's construction by invoking Augustine directly, quoting his source, Psalm 87:

Et nonobstant que je ne nomme, ne nommer pourroye, fors a peines, les saintes dames qui ont esté qui sont et qui seront, elle pevent toutes estres comprises en ceste Cité des Dames, de laquelle se peut dire: 'Gloriosa dicta sunt de te, civitas Dei!' Et la te rens close, parfaicte et bien fermee, si que je te promís.<sup>24</sup>

[And even though I have not named all the holy ladies who have lived, who are living, and who will live—for I could name only a handful!—they can all be included in this City of Ladies. Of it may be said, 'Gloriosa dicta sunt de te, civitas

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*paola e il fantasma nella cultura occidentale*, Turin: Einaudi, 1977), pp. 3–4 [subsequent reference = *Stanzas*].

<sup>20</sup> *Advision Cristine*, III. 9.

<sup>21</sup> *Advision Cristine*, III. 10.

<sup>22</sup> *Advision Cristine*, III. 10.

<sup>23</sup> *Stanzas*, p. xvi.

<sup>24</sup> *Cité des dames*, III. 18.

Dei.’ So I turn it over to you, finished perfectly and well enclosed, just as I promised.]<sup>25</sup>

Christine’s estrangement is more radical than that of her authorial source. James O’Donnell has written of Augustine’s philosophy:

The boundary between the saved and the damned in this world, as long as people live, is completely permeable. The Church does not seal itself off from the world around it, but remains permanently, vulnerably, open to it. Those outside can still come in at any time—and those inside can fail, and fall, at any time.<sup>26</sup>

The City of Ladies is just as much an alternative to the beleaguered castle of the *Roman de la rose* as it is to the Castle of Fortune: it is open to new residents, but while they can go in, they cannot come out.<sup>27</sup>

Only through intellectual distance from the City of Man can the City of Ladies take shape. Its construction is, above all, orderly. Judson Boyce Allen has shown that in the later Middle Ages, a text’s order was considered key to its ethical significance. ‘[T]he literal ordering of a text’s material corresponds exactly to the order of that mental process whereby that material was invented and made significant [...]. The book is about its own making.’<sup>28</sup> The reader is invited to take an active part in analyzing this order and its significance.

The term ‘order’ and its variants abound in Christine’s discussions of the construction process. For the sake of brevity, I will discuss just one. Dame Reason explains that divine Providence has sent her and her sisters Rectitude and Justice, ‘quoyque nous soyons choses celestielles, estre et frequenter entre les gens de ce bas monde affin de mettre ordre’<sup>29</sup> [we, although celestial beings, remain and circulate among the people of this world here below, in order to bring order].<sup>30</sup> The castle, whose architects will be the three sisters, is meant to promote this order. Reason clears out the rubble (the most glaring misogyny—this is the most actively disputational part of the book); then she lays the foundations, the cornerstone of which is the story of Semiramis (whom she portrays as another builder); finally she builds the outer walls. Rectitude builds the inner mansions and fills them with citizens. Justice adds the finishing touches (‘le surplus perface’)<sup>31</sup>. She finishes off the towers with high penthouses and peoples them

<sup>25</sup> *City of Ladies*, III. 18.

<sup>26</sup> James J. O’Donnell, *Augustine* (Boston: Twayne, 1985), p. 41.

<sup>27</sup> On Christine’s polemics of protection, see Sylvia Huot, ‘Seduction and Sublimation: Christine de Pizan, Jean de Meun, and Dante’, *Romance Notes*, 25.3 (1985), 361–73.

<sup>28</sup> Judson Boyce Allen, *The Ethical Poetic of the Later Middle Ages: A Rhetoric of Convenient Distinction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), p. 92.

<sup>29</sup> *Cité des dames*, I. 3.

<sup>30</sup> *City of Ladies*, I. 3.

<sup>31</sup> *Cité des dames*, II. 68.



with the Queen of heaven and her handmaidens, the virgin martyrs ('les superlatives'<sup>32</sup>). Mary herself is a dwelling, 'Temple de Dieu, Cele et Cloistre du Saint Esperit, Abitacle de la Trinité'<sup>33</sup> [Temple of God, Cell and Cloister of the Holy Spirit, Habitation of the Trinity'<sup>34</sup>] Christine is the porter of this castle, holding its keys and admitting only the worthy.<sup>35</sup> We might compare her here to the more dubious porters Poverty, Wealth, and Hope. Fortune's servants have various criteria for entry, but sooner or later, they are all likely to introduce their charges to Misfortune ('Mesëur'). Christine's only criterion is virtue, and entry into the City of Ladies means unequivocal, eternal bliss.

### *Architecture and Compilation*

Christine pursues the association of art, architecture, and intellectual order in her compilation on Charles V. She opens the book with a prayer and an invocation of 'Les choses expedientes et comme necessaires à l'edifficacion de meurs vertueux et louables de comun cours' [those things useful and necessary to the edification of virtuous and praiseworthy morals in the common course of events]. We might compare this to Matheolus's 'useless' book which she castigates at the beginning of the *Cité des dames* as 'de mal prouffit a aucune edifice de vertu et de meurs [...]'<sup>36</sup> [of no use in building virtue or manners]<sup>37</sup>. The teachings of the wise 'en ordre de bien vivre' [on the order of righteous living] will be reflected in Christine's book; 'en ordre de parleure' [in the order of their presentation].<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> *Cité des dames*, III. 3.

<sup>33</sup> *Cité des dames*, III. 1.

<sup>34</sup> *City of Ladies*, III. 1 (translation slightly emended).

<sup>35</sup> See *Cité des dames*, I. 6. See also Psalm 84. 10: 'I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.'

<sup>36</sup> *Cité des dames*, I. 1.

<sup>37</sup> *City of Ladies*, I. 1.

<sup>38</sup> *Fais et bonnes meurs*, I. 1 (vol. I, pp. 4–5): 'Sire Dieux, euvre mes levres, enlumine ma pensee, et mon entendement esclaires à celle fin que m'ignorence n'encombre mes sens à expliquer les choses conceues en ma memoire, et soit mon commencement, moyen et fin à la louenge de toy, souveraine poissance et digneté incirconscribable, à sens humain non comprenable! Les choses expedientes et comme necessaires à l'edifficacion de meurs vertueux et louables de comun cours, veons par les sapiens en leurs escrips amenteus et ramenez à memoire pour nostre instruction *en ordre de bien vivre*, si est digne chose que, avec les vehementes raisons prouvées et solues, d'eulz bailliées, exemples vrais et notoires soient certificacions des choses conduittes *en ordre de parleure*; pour ce, moy Cristine de Pizan, suivant le stille des premierains et devanciers, nos ediffieurs en meurs redevables, emprens nouvelle compilation menée en stille prosal.'

The book is itself a construction: slightly later, Christine draws an explicit parallel between compilation, architecture, and embroidery, all three of which are conceptual art, concerned with order, intent, and imagination. It does not matter who created the examples, the building blocks or the threads. What does matter is whether the artist knows how to make his or her point: ‘il me souffist seulement que les sache appliquer à propos, si que bien puissent servir à la fin de l’ymaginacion, à laquelle je tends à parfaire’<sup>39</sup> [it is only necessary that I know how to apply them correctly, so that they can serve the end of my imagination, which is my goal]. Christine’s ‘end’ is to commemorate the prudence of Charles V, so that others may imitate it. She writes that, ‘tout le contenu de ce livre est tirant’ [à] la vertu de prudence en la personne du roy Charles’<sup>40</sup> [all the content of this book is meant to illustrate the virtue of prudence in the person of King Charles]. Although the book was originally produced for the dukes of Burgundy, Philip the Bold (Charles V’s brother), and John the Fearless (Philip’s heir), it clearly also targets Charles VI. Known for his imprudent existence, the unfortunate monarch suffered from what we might today call manic depression, as well as violent delusions. He could have benefited from the example of his wise father, whom he had lost at the age of twelve.

Charles VI might also have benefited from Christine’s example. A few years later, Christine would justify her compilation on warfare (the *Livre des fais d’armes et de chevalerie*), by comparing herself to a builder who has already succeeded in constructing several fortresses and would now like to construct another:

Après mes autres escriptures passees, sicomme celui qui a basti plusieurs fors edifices est plus hardy de se charger d’ediffier un chastel ou forterescue quant garny se sent de couvenables estoifes ad ce neccessaires, d’entreprendre a parler en ce present livre du tres honnouré office des armes et de chevalerie, [...] si que le declarent les loys et divers aucteurs, ainsi [...] i’ay assemblé les matieres et cueilly en plusieurs livres pour produire à mon entencion ou present volume.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> *Fais et bonnes meurs*, II. 21 (vol. I, p. 191): ‘[T]out ainsi comme l’ovrier de architecture ou maçonage n’a mie fait les pierres et les estoifes, dont il bastist et ediffie le chastel ou maison, qu’il tent à parfaire et où il labeure, non obstant assemble les matières ensemble, chascune où elle doit servir, selon la fin de l’entencion où il tent, aussi les brodeurs, qui font diverses divises, selon la soubtivité de leur ymaginacion, sanz faulte ne firent mie les soyes, l’or, ne les matières, et ainsi d’autes ouvrages, tout ainsi vrayement n’ay je mie fait toutes les matières, de quoy le traittié de ma compilation est composé; il me souffist seulement que les sache appliquer à propos, si que bien puissent servir à la fin de l’ymaginacion, à laquelle je tends à parfaire.’

<sup>40</sup> *Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 11 (vol. II, p. 33).

<sup>41</sup> Paris, BnF fr. 603, fol. 2<sup>ra-b</sup>.

[I am encouraged, in light of my other writings, to undertake to speak in this book of the most honourable office of arms and chivalry, [...] as set forth in divers laws and by several authors, just as the builder who has already put up several strongholds is bold enough to construct a castle or fortress when he feels he has the materials to accomplish the work. So to this end I have gathered and assembled facts and subject matter from various books to produce this present volume.]<sup>42</sup>

In a *coup de maîtresse*, Christine even gives advice on how to build real castles.<sup>43</sup> The prince may be an artist, but the artist may also become (or at least resemble) a prince. In Christine's vision, both statecraft and artistry are functions of prudence.

### *The Portrait of the Prince as a Conceptual Artist*

We must now add prudence to the group which includes art, architecture, and order.<sup>44</sup> In her definition of wisdom, Christine explains that prudence and art (or 'artfulness') both lie in the practical, deliberative part of the soul.<sup>45</sup> Witness her characterization of Charles V as a: 'sage artiste, [...] vrai architecteur et deviseur certain et prudent ordeneur'.<sup>46</sup> She portrays the king as mindful of his own end, an alien sojourner in the Augustinian sense; this mindfulness reinforces his desire to build an ideal state on earth during the time allotted to him.<sup>47</sup> According to Christine, the king is such a fine architect that he deserves the title of 'vray conduiseur de son peuple et garde-clef et fermeure de chasteaulx et citez et villes'<sup>48</sup> [true leader of his people, keeper of the keys, and securer of castles, strongholds, and cities]. He is like Christine, who guards the City of Ladies.

Christine's notion of the ideal city and its residents is Augustinian, but she derives her understanding of the ideal city-builder from Thomas Aquinas. The *Fais et bonnes meurs* has many references to 'Aristotle', which are in fact paraphrases of Aquinas's *Commentary* on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. In his Prologue Aquinas frames the hierarchy of knowledge in political terms. He describes wisdom this way:

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<sup>42</sup> *Chevalerie* I. 1 (translation of Willard slightly emended).

<sup>43</sup> See BnF fr. 603, fol. 34<sup>rb</sup> and ff. and *Deeds of Arms*, II. 14.

<sup>44</sup> On Christine's understanding of *prudence*, see Karen Green's paper in this volume.

<sup>44</sup> On Christine's understanding of *prudence*, see Karen Green's paper in this volume.

<sup>45</sup> *Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 2 and 6 (vol. II, pp. 10 and 21).

<sup>46</sup> *Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 11 (vol. II, p. 37).

<sup>47</sup> *Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 6 (vol. II, pp. 21–25).

<sup>48</sup> *Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 7 (vol. II, p. 27).

Quae autem sit haec scientia et circa qualia, considerari potest, si diligenter respiciatur quomodo est aliquis idoneus ad regendum. Sicut enim, ut [...] philosophus dicit, homines intellectu vigentes, naturaliter aliorum rectores et domini sunt [...]: ita scientia debet esse naturaliter aliarum regulatrix, quae maxime intellectualis est.<sup>49</sup>

[We can discover which science this is and the sort of things with which it is concerned by carefully examining the qualities of the good ruler; for just as men of superior intelligence are naturally the rulers and masters of others, [...] as the Philosopher says [...], in a similar way that science which is intellectual in the highest degree should be naturally the ruler of others.]<sup>50</sup>

Although Aquinas's main aim is not to discuss politics, the connection must have seemed natural to Christine who, like her contemporaries, revered Charles V as a wise ruler. Like Aristotle, Aquinas conceives of art as a form of knowledge; it is a part of wisdom and as such, it is described by the same word, 'scientia', literally, knowledge.<sup>51</sup> Indeed it is the supreme form of knowledge, the product of experience (another form of knowledge), which is itself the product of memory. Aquinas's Prologue closes by naming the three faces of wisdom which will be the book's object: the science of wisdom is called 'theology', insofar as it studies God, 'metaphysics', insofar as it studies things which transcend nature, and 'first philosophy', insofar as it studies the first causes of things.<sup>52</sup>

The links between art, wisdom, and the pursuit of divine truths all come together in Christine's portrait of Charles V. As master artist, the king seeks to know God and build his city on earth. Aquinas distinguishes between practical and speculative arts, declaring that, 'illi artifices dicendi sunt sapientiores, quorum scientiae non sunt ad utilitatem inventae, sed propter ipsum scire, cuiusmodi sunt scientiae speculativae'<sup>53</sup> [Those artists must be said to be wiser whose sciences were discovered not for the sake of utility but for the sake of knowing, that is, the speculative sciences].<sup>54</sup> Aquinas holds that the physical labour involved in producing art is less important than the intellectual work of designing it. Like his source, Aristotle, he is especially interested in the theory and practice of architecture: 'Illi qui sciunt causam et propter quid comparantur ad scientes tantum quia, sicut architectonicae artes ad artes artificum manu operantium. Sed architectonicae artes sunt nobiliores'<sup>55</sup> [Those who know the

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<sup>49</sup> *In duodecim libros*, I. 1.

<sup>50</sup> *Commentary*, I. 1.

<sup>51</sup> *In duodecim libros*, I. 1. 32 and *Commentary*, I. 1. 32.

<sup>52</sup> *In duodecim libros* and *Commentary*, Prologue.

<sup>53</sup> *In duodecim libros*, I. 1. 32.

<sup>54</sup> *Commentary*, I. 1. 32.

<sup>55</sup> *In duodecim libros*, I. 1.25.

cause and reason why a thing is so are compared to those who merely know that it is so as the architectonic arts are to the arts of manual labourers. But the architectonic arts are nobler].<sup>56</sup> Although Christine reiterates Aquinas's statement that architecture is a practical art, her treatment of it in the *Fais et bonnes meurs* and especially in the *Cité des dames* suggests that it might also sometimes serve the ends of speculation.

Christine depicts even the most 'concrete' projects in otherworldly terms. This is especially clear in a chapter of the *Fais et bonnes meurs* entitled, '*Cy dit comment le roy Charles estoit droit artiste et apris es sciences, et des beaulx maçonnages, qu'il fist faire.*' Charles V's claim to the title of 'true artist' ('droit artiste') and 'very great artist' ('tres grant artiste') depends first of all on his mastery of the seven liberal arts, which Christine calls both the '.vii. sciences liberales' and the '.vii. ars' (grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, and astrology).<sup>57</sup> Only after explaining the liberal arts does Christine focus on the plastic arts, including architecture: 'art, en tant que s'estent l'oeu[v]re formelle'. The second part of chapter title links the king's artistry with his sponsorship of building projects, rather than with actual labour. Again Christine privileges theory over practice. She lists the king's projects in an orderly fashion, moving from churches to castles to what she calls simply 'other buildings', from the first to the third estate. Her desire to praise the king's designs sometimes leads her to some embroidery of her own. For example, she claims that Charles built the castles Beaulté and Plaisance, when in fact, he only restored them.<sup>58</sup> It is by chance or design that Christine attributes the foundation of places called 'Beauty' and 'Pleasure' to the king? None of the other buildings she mentions has such a significant name.

Christine stretches the truth, in order 'to serve the end of [her] imagination'. She treats Charles V's architectural projects as proof more of his ability to calculate and dispose of resources, than of his creation of a living, breathing community. The effect is rather like that of a postcard of a monument, from which all individuals who might block the view have been air-brushed out. The only individual left is the king—the planner, the supervisor, the mind. In a sense, the other people have become redundant. The king has become the community. He is the city and the castle, much as Mary is the Temple, the Cell, and the Cloister.

Christine's carefully designed commemoration of the royal architecture recalls the mnemonic function which medieval people ascribed to architecture itself.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> *Commentary*, I. 1. 25.

<sup>57</sup> Christine's privileging of astrology over astronomy makes sense, given the profession of her late father, Thomas de Pizan (astrology).

<sup>58</sup> *Fais et bonnes meurs*, III, vol. II, p. 40, n. 3 and p. 41, n. 1.

<sup>59</sup> The classic study of this issue is Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago:

The Castle of Fortune and the City of Ladies are themselves memory palaces, the former chaotic, the latter harmonious.<sup>60</sup> The murals in Fortune's great hall depict the untidy story of the City of Man. Although the story begins with the Creation and Fall and ends with the present day, it is not a universal history, as has sometimes been supposed. It barely mentions the life and death of Jesus which give Christian historiography its meaning. As a result the observer–narrator Christine concludes unhappily that life has no meaning beyond the whims of Fortune. The work ends with her locked, despairingly, in her study. It is not surprising that the *Cité des dames* opens with Christine ready to set aside such grim histories. The City of Ladies shapes sacred narrative carefully, so that Christine, who is spectator, builder, and resident, reaches a state of blissful revelation. Her improved memory (that is, her clearer vision of history) has important implications. If architecture is an aid to memory, and memory is a part of prudence,<sup>61</sup> then 'solid' architecture may itself be an aid to prudence, and not just a sign of it. Although Aquinas links prudence to the practical arts and sciences, Christine understands that prudent planning and the resulting calm can also help to foster the art of speculation.

## Conclusions

The prudent prince can help build the City of Ladies. Prudence, which Christine grounds in memory, intelligence, and foresight, will be essential in a city whose residents will include 'tant les passees dames, comme les presentes et celles a

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University of Chicago Press, 1966). Also valuable is Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>60</sup> Jody Enders has discussed the implications for feminism of mnemotechnique in the *Cité des dames*. See Jody Enders, 'The Feminist Mnemonics of Christine de Pizan', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 55.3 (September 1994), 231–49.

<sup>61</sup> Christine's *Livre de prudence* lists memory as the crowning element of prudence: 'Prudence est discepcion de bonnes et mauvaises choses en la fuite du mal et en l'esleccion du bien. Car il ne souffist mie les biens et les maulx deviser et discerner les uns des aultres, se l'eleccion des bons n'est prise en deboutant et laissant les maulx; et est devisee es especes qui s'ensuivent: Prudence en: Entendement, Providence, Circonspection, Doccilité, Caucion, Intelligence, Memoire' (Paris, BnF fr. 605, fol. 20<sup>th</sup>) [Prudence is the discernment of good and bad things in the flight from evil and the choice of the good. For it is not nearly enough just to know the difference between the these things, if the good is not chosen and evil is not entirely left behind; and it is of the following sorts: Prudence in: Understanding, Foresight, Circumspection, Teachability, Caution, Intelligence, and Memory].

avenir<sup>62</sup> [ladies from the past as well as from the present and future].<sup>63</sup> The prince not only can help, but he should: Dame Reason opens the book, famously declaring that noblemen have abandoned virtuous ladies to attack. Dame Justice closes the book, invoking the help of the Virgin as ‘deffenderesse, protectresse et garde contre tous assaulx d’ennemis et du monde’<sup>64</sup> [defendress, protectress, and guard against all assaults of enemies and of the world].<sup>65</sup>

Indeed, why should not the artist-prince live in the City of Ladies, after it is built? Christine invests a great deal of critical energy arguing that women are the equals of men. Are not men then the equals of women? Surely the prince’s place is among the ladies. According to Dame Justice, the City’s allegorical ‘gates’ (‘portes et clostures’) are the saints best known for their hospitality to holy men.<sup>66</sup> In a different vein, one might recall Christine’s famous metamorphosis into a man in the *Livre de la mutacion de Fortune*. Alone in the realm of Fortune and beset by perils, the widowed heroine is transformed into a man.<sup>67</sup> To survive in Fortune’s City—the City of Man—Christine must become a man. To prosper in the City of God—which is also the City of Ladies—the prince must become a ‘lady’. In a word, he must be like Christine. And what better way to justify the prince’s artistic ambitions, in an age in which artists such as Christine de Pizan first began to earn a living through their art? The artist Christine and the prince Charles V both hold the keys to the City.<sup>68</sup> Knowledge is the source of their power. Christine points to the intellectual nature of art and encourages her princely readers to pursue it as a vital part of statecraft.

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<sup>62</sup> *Cité des dames*, III. 19.

<sup>63</sup> *City of Ladies*, III. 19.

<sup>64</sup> *Cité des dames*, III. 1.

<sup>65</sup> *City of Ladies*, III. 1 (translation slightly emended).

<sup>66</sup> *Cité des dames*, III. 18.

<sup>67</sup> *Mutacion de Fortune*, vv. 1313–63.

<sup>68</sup> *Cité des dames*, I. 6 and *Fais et bonnes meurs*, III. 11 (vol. II, p. 37).





## *Moyennerresse de traictié de paix:* Christine de Pizan's Mediators

TRACY ADAMS

The work of recent critics has emphasized the extent of Christine de Pizan's contribution to political thought, revising earlier perceptions of her as moral philosopher with little to offer political theorists.<sup>1</sup> Certainly Christine was interested in the morals of her leaders. But, as Kate Langdon Forhan has argued recently, her interest was to a large extent practical: she tended to equate a leader's personal virtue with the competent execution of procedures beneficial to the people.

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<sup>1</sup> Kate Langdon Forhan's recent *The Political Theory of Christine de Pizan* (Burlington, VT; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002) is a comprehensive study of Christine's political thought. As Forhan notes in the introduction to this work, Christine's importance as a political theorist was recognized as early as 1838 by Raymond Thomassy in his *Essai sur les écrits politiques de Christine de Pisan*. After a long period of neglect, her contributions to this area have begun to receive attention in recent years. The early studies of Claude Gauvard, 'Christine de Pizan a-t-elle eu une pensée politique?' *Revue historique*, 250 (1973), 417–30, and Gianni Mombello, 'Quelques aspects de la pensée politique de Christine de Pizan d'après ses oeuvres publiées', in *Culture et politique en France à l'époque de l'humanisme et de la renaissance*, ed. by F. Simone (Turin: Accademia delle Scienze, 1974), pp. 43–153, were followed by several works in the nineties. Contributions include *Politics, Gender and Genre: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Margaret Brabant (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992); Claude Gauvard, 'Christine de Pizan et ses contemporains: L'engagement politique des écrivains dans le royaume de France aux XIV<sup>e</sup> et XV<sup>e</sup> siècles', in *Une femme de lettres au moyen âges: études autour de Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Liliane Dulac and Bernard Ribémont (Orléans: Paradigme, 1995), pp. 105–28; Berenice Carroll, 'On the Causes of War and the Quest for Peace: Christine de Pizan and Early Peace Theory', in *Au champ des escriptures: III<sup>e</sup> colloque international sur Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Eric Hicks and others (Paris: Champion, 2000), pp. 337–58; Susan J. Dudash, 'Christine de Pizan's Views of the Third Estate', in *Contexts and Continuities: Proceedings of the IV<sup>th</sup> International Colloquium on Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Angus J. Kennedy and others (Glasgow: Glasgow University Press, 2002), pp. 315–30.

For example, in Christine's view, writes Forhan, 'justice is the maintenance of law and order. The virtue of justice is entirely conflated with and subsumed by justice as process'.<sup>2</sup> Earlier treatises for kings had passed down wisdom from ancient authorities, focusing more on abstract virtue than on procedures for dispensing a particular virtue's effects throughout the body politic. In addressing the problem of how to govern wisely within an actual situation, however, the treatises of Christine and her contemporaries, serve, in the words of Claude Gauvard, 'moins à la connaissance qu'à la réflexion sur le réel immédiat et, par conséquent, à ce qu'on peut appeler l'histoire contemporaine' [less for knowledge than for thinking about immediate reality, and consequently about what one can call contemporary history].<sup>3</sup>

This historical impulse characterizes Christine's works on the great 'réel immédiat' of her time, the brutal power struggle that emerged in the wake of Charles VI's insanity between the faction of Louis, the Duke of Orleans, replaced after his assassination by his son, Charles, (the group that has come to be known as the Armagnacs), and the faction of Philip, Duke of Burgundy, replaced after his death by his son John. In certain of these works, Christine speaks on behalf of the people of France, pleading with the dukes to lay down their arms for the good of the country. Given the practical cast of so many of her works, it seems at first glance that her purpose in addressing the dukes must be straightforwardly to offer advice to them. And yet, her didacticism may be working in more complex ways. Emphasizing the public function of political documents and 'mirror for princes'-type works during the Middle Ages, Joyce Coleman suggests a broader audience for a political writer like Christine than the individuals to whom she addressed her works. Works like Christine's were often read aloud in the homes of the nobility and the bourgeoisie, Coleman explains, a process that must have led the audiences into discussions of politics. Ideas about power and kingship presented in the works must have been debated by the listeners and afterwards spread to a larger public through further discussion.<sup>4</sup> Christine's purpose, then, may have been as much to create solidarity

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<sup>2</sup> Forhan, *Political Theory*, p. 120. In Chapter 5, Forhan distinguishes the 'substantive' idea of justice, which defines the virtue according to norms from the idea of justice as 'procedural', that is, arising from the application of 'just' processes.

<sup>3</sup> Gauvard, 'Christine de Pizan et ses contemporains', p. 106.

<sup>4</sup> Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996). See in particular Chapter 5, 'Aural History'. The question of the audiences for Christine's political writings is vexed. It seems unlikely that only the addressee of a given manuscript, be it the queen, the Duke of Berry, or Louis, would have read a work addressed to them. Further on the difficulty of ascertaining the specific audiences for Christine's political works see Eric Hicks, 'The Political Significance of Christine de Pizan', in Brabant, pp. 1–15. He writes: 'Who other than the queen or the Duke of Berry, could have had knowledge of the letters purportedly addressed to them? If we discount the purely moral effect of these appeals—and *a fortiori* the Mirror of Princes' tradition underlying Christine's later political works—the question cries out

among the people as to instruct the dukes; in other words, Christine shows the public how to imagine itself in relation to the battling royal relations. Certainly the attempt to clarify ideological positions is as much a goal of fourteenth and fifteenth-century political treatises as the offering of directly applicable political advice. Although referring to England, Larry Scanlon's observations on the ideology of royalty during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are pertinent to France as well. The royal family depended upon writers for ideological affirmation, Scanlon writes, noting that as poets 'staked out the claims of a new vernacular tradition, what they encountered in kingship was not some fully formed and uncontested institution. Rather they encountered a dynamic political structure in the midst of defining itself ideologically [...]'.<sup>5</sup> The Valois dynasty under Charles VI badly needed ideological bolstering. As of the crisis of 1328, when that line replaced the defunct Capetian line of kings on the throne of France, the claim of heredity from father to son had lost its absolute authority. With the original line of direct descent broken, there was no compelling reason to assume that a son would necessarily follow his father to the throne. Although Charles V had re-established the law of succession, his son's periodic inability to rule because of insanity undid his father's work, creating a power vacuum which resulted in a civil war and, as the warring factions took turns allying themselves with the English, eventually afforded Henry V of England opportunities to press his claim to the throne. The violent struggle for control of the French government menaced the institution of the monarchy and necessitated new discourses on how to incorporate a dysfunctional ruler into the ideology of the kingship. Public support was necessary if the monarchy was to remain intact.

Taking advantage of the king's illness to augment their own power, the dukes could hardly serve as figures behind whom to rally the people to lend the monarchy moral support. Christine thus chooses Charles's queen, Isabeau of Bavaria, for the position, foregrounding her non-threatening qualities.<sup>6</sup> In this essay I will suggest

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for an answer' (pp. 10–11). See also Linda Leppig 'The Political Rhetoric of Christine de Pizan: *Lamentacion sur les maux de la guerre civile*', in Brabant, pp. 141–56. Leppig observes that whether the *Lamentacion* letter was intended to circulate widely or whether it was intended to be read by the Duke of Berry alone, in 'rhetorically expanding the scope of the audience Christine capitalizes on the emotional value of the body politic as a paternalistic construct of government and renders her legal argumentation more poignant by confronting those responsible for the near collapse of the realm with their victims' (p. 153).

<sup>5</sup> Larry Scanlon, 'The King's Two Voices: Narrative and Power in Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes*', in *Literary Practice and Social Change in Britain, 1380–1530*, ed. by Lee Patterson (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 216–47 (p. 217).

<sup>6</sup> Christine presents herself in a similar guise. Recent works addressing the role of mediator in Christine's work include Eric Hicks, 'Une femme dans le monde: Christine de Pizan et l'écriture de la politique', in *L'Hostellerie de pensée: études sur l'art littéraire au moyen âge offertes à Daniel Poirion par ses anciens élèves*, ed. by Eric Hicks and Manuela Python (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1995), pp. 233–43, and Linda Leppig, 'The

that Christine's treatments as mediator of Isabeau in *Une Epistre a la royne de France* and *Lamentacion sur les maux de la guerre civile* (which is directed to the Duke of Berry but addresses the queen among a series of other figures), and of the dauphin Louis of Guyenne, in the *Livre de paix*, should not be read as calls for these two royal representatives to intervene in the struggle, but as the creation of icons, or figures, behind whom the people can gather while they wait for the king to regain his sanity. A perception prevails of Isabeau and Louis as wilfully disregarding Christine's pleas to put a stop to the hostilities that were tearing the country apart.<sup>7</sup> Christine's depiction of Isabeau in particular has been understood by modern readers as sharply critical. Reading the *Epistre* and the *Lamentacion* as literal calls for an inactive queen to action, many have assumed that Isabeau did not achieve peace for lack of trying and blame her for indifference. Louis of Guyenne, whom Christine exhorts to behave virtuously in the *Livre de paix* to improve his chances of successfully mediating between the warring dukes, has also been deemed merrily negligent of his duties by modern readers. But while much of what Christine writes in her political works was undoubtedly intended as straightforward advice to the royal figures to whom she addresses her remarks, she also works to shape the public images of those she addresses. When she urges Isabeau to mediate she is not literally counselling the queen to take up that activity—the queen had already been mediating for years at that point. Rather, Christine's purpose is to foreground Isabeau's in-between position, and in so doing, to promote an image of Isabeau as untainted by the narrow political interests of the ducal factions. She therefore emphasizes Isabeau's liminal qualities, painting a figure both inside and outside the monarchy—posing no direct threat to the king *and* able to represent the totality of the French community. Through this depiction Christine draws up the proper categories for understanding the figures vying for a primacy that she argues non-threatening regents must preserve for the king alone. Isabeau is different from the central actors struggling for political control (John of Burgundy in particular), who menace the king as they carry out their own agendas despite their claims to represent the people. As for the adolescent Louis, in the *Livre de paix* Christine valorizes his outsider status, stressing his similarity to his grandfather, Charles V, also called upon to take control as a youth, who went on to become a great king and a worthy representative

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Political Rhetoric of Christine de Pizan'.

<sup>7</sup> This is despite the fact that Isabeau's rehabilitation has been underway for some years now. See R. C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue at the Court of Charles VI* (New York: AMS Press, 1986) and *Tales of the Marriage Bed from Medieval France (1300–1500)* (Providence, RI: Picardy Press, 1992), both of which rehabilitate Isabeau. Rachel Gibbons offers a concise history of Isabeau's defamation in 'Isabeau of Bavaria, Queen of France (1385–1422): The Creation of an Historical Villainess', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, series 6.6 (1996), 51–73. See also her 'The Piety of Isabeau of Bavaria, Queen of France, 1385–1422', in *Courts, Counties and the Capital in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. by Diana Dunn (Stroud: Sutton, 1996), pp. 205–24.

of the entire people by representing himself as mediator between the divine and his earthly community. Although young and torn between his manipulative relatives, Louis represents a powerful sacred force that transcends his limited authority. In narrating Louis's attempts to negotiate peace between his cousin Charles, Duke of Orleans, and his uncle, John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, Christine creates solidarity between the dauphin, the king's closest representative, and the French people, creating a moment of spontaneous community that excludes the warring dukes. Ostensibly addressing members of the royal family, the *Epistre* and the *Lamentacion* and the *Livre de paix* instruct a wider public in how to understand the roles of the queen and the dauphin in the struggle for power.

### 'Moyenne de paix'

Victor Turner's notion of 'liminality' offers a perspective for reconsidering the mediator figures that Christine creates of Isabeau and Louis and the purposes she intends them to serve. First, liminal beings occupy a position both inside and outside of a given system: they are 'neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial'.<sup>8</sup> Second, reflections upon social structures, in whatever form they take—artistic, philosophical, or political—tend to be generated by or around persons occupying liminal positions. Through such persons society exposes the false claims of its upper echelons, levelling social divisions and temporarily restoring a fundamental unity—'a generalized social bond that has ceased to be and has simultaneously yet to be fragmented into a multiplicity of structural ties'. Cultural forms arising from liminal beings thus permit 'periodical reclassifications of reality and man's relationship to society, nature, and culture'.<sup>9</sup>

In casting Isabeau and Louis as mediators, Christine marshals the role's power to summon up the energy of the community and bring it to bear upon the dangerous dukes, exposing the selfish motives of these highly ranked and politically powerful individuals and creating unity within French society in opposition to them. Christine is not urging Isabeau and Louis into diplomacy in a literal sense. Rather, in her works she is creating figures around whom the people can rally and thereby enter into the political fray—in a quasi-ritualistic rather than organized, democratic sense. Christine, we might say, recognizes that 'culture is fed by affectual and volitional as well as cognitive sources [...]' and that she therefore relies upon the symbolism of liminal figures to reinforce the ideology of royalty she is attempting to uphold

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<sup>8</sup> Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), p. 95.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 96, 128–29.

against the dukes.<sup>10</sup> Christine's political writings can thus be seen as 'cultural performances,' inviting members of her society to recognize and comprehend on an emotional level what they are doing to themselves in allying themselves with the violent factions. Even her most overtly contemporary political treatises, like the *Livre de paix*, I will suggest, combine practical advice for good governance with lessons in ideological definition.

Recent research on queenship has drawn upon Turner's notion of liminality to suggest that while late medieval queens were not powerful in the sense of wielding direct political authority, they could nonetheless influence events from an 'in-between' position. Thus the role was potentially powerful. But it was also dangerous. Louise Fradenburg describes its inherent risks, writing that although by representing alliances, queens can create unity, they can also just as easily create the opposite effect.<sup>11</sup> She writes, 'When, on the basis of their foreignness, their femaleness, the in-betweenness of their regencies, or the ambiguous nature of their sovereignty, queens are constructed as what, in Turner's terms, we might call 'liminal' figures—marginal to official institutions and practices of authority, though in various ways embedded within them, or made 'symbolic' of them—the result is their particularly intense association with the concepts both of division and of unity. The symbolic capital of queenship is thus built upon the central role of queens in alliance-formation: queens embody the unity of nation or people or land, or they embody the forces that might tear that unity to pieces'.<sup>12</sup>

As the physical embodiment of an alliance, one of the queen's reasons for being was to maintain harmony between the parties whose pact she incarnated. However, this position was tricky, because if in the eyes of the family from which she went forth she represented the 'inside contact' in the midst of new allies, she also represented the 'outsider' for her married family. And not only was the position tricky; it was paradoxical. The queen was powerful, in that she had access to power (that is, she could intercede with the powerful on others' behalves), but as a female she possessed no power of her own. In other words, as queen she was called upon to perform duties that she was simultaneously prevented from carrying out by virtue of her womanly dependence. Furthermore, as scapegoat theory warns, the position of 'insider/outsider' can be dangerous.<sup>13</sup> For when internal dissension threatens unity,

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<sup>10</sup> See Victor Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance*, introd. by Richard Schechner, (New York: PAJ, 1986), p. 103.

<sup>11</sup> Louise Olga Fradenburg, 'Introduction: Rethinking Queenship', in *Women and Sovereignty*, ed. by Louise Olga Fradenburg (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1992), pp. 1–13.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> See René Girard, *The Scapegoat*, trans. by Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), especially Chapters 2 and 3. Girard's analysis of Marie Antoinette offers an interesting parallel with Isabeau: 'The queen belongs to several familiar categories of victims of persecution; she is not only a queen but a foreigner. Her Austrian

society instinctively seeks an 'insider/outsider' as a scapegoat upon which to spend the violence it cannot afford to turn upon itself. Responsible for negotiating peace, but powerless to enforce the agreements she helps to effect, the mediating queen occupies an absurd role, a role that bears the seeds of its own destruction by perpetually arousing expectations it cannot fulfil.

Isabeau did not negotiate her difficult position with great success. In 1405 her reputation seems to have taken a plunge because of her friendship with Louis, Duke of Orleans, who was using public revenue to support an appallingly extravagant personal lifestyle.<sup>14</sup> While she appears to have recovered from this fiasco in public relations during her own time, modern readers continue to depict her as obliviously and wildly frivolous. Moreover, modern readers continue to hold Isabeau responsible for the failure of the negotiations she helped forge between Charles's warring relations, and ultimately for selling the French kingdom out to the English. But Isabeau's negative reputation among modern audiences cannot be justified by historical observation. The series of *ad hominem* arguments deployed against her by popular historians like Barbara Tuchman suggests that something beyond reasoned historical assessment is at work:

Frivolous and sensuous, still an alien with a thick German accent, humiliated by her husband's mad aversion, Isabeau abandoned Charles to his valets [...] The Queen herself turned to frantic pleasures and to adultery combined with political intrigue and a passionate pursuit of money. Insecure in France, she devoted herself to amassing a personal fortune and promoting the enrichment and interests of her Bavarian family [...] Her sway at court grew ever more extravagant and hectic, the ladies' dresses more low-necked, the amours more scandalous, the festivities more extreme [...].<sup>15</sup>

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origin is mentioned repeatedly in the popular accusations against her. The court that condemns her is heavily influenced by the Paris mob' (p. 20).

<sup>14</sup> Isabeau's plummet in popularity seems to have been a reaction to the perception that she was helping herself to government money, like the Duke of Orleans. However, Famiglietti (*Royal Intrigue*, p. 43) questions the validity of this perception. 'The reaction against Isabeau clearly resulted from the idea that she was appropriating government money, as was Louis of Orleans. But was she? While Louis received over 400,000 francs from the government in the fiscal year 1404–05, Isabeau's household accounts show that she received (from all sources) only in the neighbourhood of 80,000 francs'. The queen's reputation seems to have been restored after a short period of unpopularity. Writing about an uprising of Parisians in 1413, the Religieux of Saint-Denis, who had earlier written disapprovingly of Isabeau's financial dealings, refers to her as the *reginam venerabilem*. Continues Famiglietti (*Royal Intrigue*, p. 43): 'Add to this the fact that a spokesman for the Parisians during their revolt of 1413 told the Duke of Guyenne that his conduct had strayed despite the sound moral education given him by his mother, once again called the venerable queen.' See also Rachel C. Gibbons, 'The Queen as "Social Mannequin". Consumerism and Expenditure at the Court of Isabeau of Bavaria, 1393–1422', *Journal of Medieval History*, 26 (2000), 371–95.

<sup>15</sup> Barbara Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century* (New York:

Tuchman's description highlights two attributes traditionally associated with scapegoating: foreignness and femaleness. Other recent assessments of Isabeau's life suggest scapegoating, as well. She can't win in an article on Capetian women and the regency where she is taken to task—in the same paragraph—for not attempting and for attempting to wield political control: 'Benefiting from the upheavals, the opportunistic Isabeau increased her wealth and power but preferred a life of entertainment and celebration to the establishment of political domination. According to the drift of the moment, she allied herself with whomever seemed likely to triumph: first her brother-in-law Duke Louis of Orleans, and after his assassination, his murderer Duke John the Fearless of Burgundy.'<sup>16</sup>

Liminal from so many perspectives—queen, foreigner, woman—Isabeau thus remains a scapegoat even today for the disastrous war between the Armagnacs and Burgundians, and she therefore serves as a lightning rod for the entire gamut of misogynistic insults, from luxuriousness to favouritism to promiscuity. Tuchman even pulls out the notorious argument of excess weight. 'In the end,' Tuchman concludes, 'obese and depraved, she outlived her husband by fifteen years.'<sup>17</sup> Indeed, Isabeau's alleged obesity is a fixture in modern accounts.<sup>18</sup> Referring to the period of 1416–17 when the Armagnacs held power in Paris and the two dauphins had just died in quick succession, leaving the future Charles VII in that position, one biographer places the primary blame for Isabeau's failure to take control of the government herself on her excess poundage (although he allows for the possibility that her distress over the sudden deaths of her two sons might have had some effect upon her emotional ability to take charge. 'Il n'y avait personne pour diriger le gouvernement [...]. Il restait Isabeau. Mais alourdie par l'embonpoint, peut-être désemparée par le décès de ses deux fils, elle ne semble pas avoir joué alors un rôle prépondérant dans la vie politique' [There was nobody to control the government. [...] There remained Isabeau. But weighed down by stoutness, perhaps disabled by the loss of her two sons, she seems not to have played any longer a dominant role in political life].<sup>19</sup>

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Ballantine, 1979), p. 515.

<sup>16</sup> André Poulet, 'Capetian Women and the Regency: The Genesis of a Vocation' in *Medieval Queenship*, ed. by John Carmi Parsons (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p. 115.

<sup>17</sup> Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror*, p. 515.

<sup>18</sup> See Gibbons ('Isabeau of Bavaria', p. 55). 'Many have chosen to accept the vehement diatribe of the 1406 propaganda pamphlet known as the *Songe véritable* in which the queen is described as "enveloppée en laide peau". Through a mistranslation of this as ugly fat, a myth has been developed around her supposed obesity, backed up by fanciful stories about palace doors having to be widened so she could fit through.'

<sup>19</sup> Jean Verdon, *Isabeau de Bavière: La Mal-aimée* (Paris: Tallandier, 1981 and 2001), p. 179.



Despite the relative scarcity of references to Isabeau herself in Christine's writings and despite recent revisions of the portrayals of the queen by Brantôme and the Marquis de Sade, it is generally taken for granted that Christine, like so many modern readers, viewed the queen with disapprobation. References to Christine's supposed disapproval of the love affair between Isabeau and her brother-in-law, the Duke of Orleans, abound, even though historians today know this 'love affair' to be an invention of the late fifteenth century, as do allusions to Christine's disapproval of the disorder of Isabeau's court, although historians today insist that Isabeau herself was unaware of the scandalous behavior of her courtiers.<sup>20</sup> Christine de Pizan deliberately and fruitfully deploys the imagery of the paradoxical position of mediator-queen in a number of her writings, but it is never for the purpose of criticizing Isabeau for frivolity or inaction.<sup>21</sup>

On the contrary, in the *Livre de la cité des dames*, Christine writes approvingly of Isabeau's virtue and love of her subjects:

She [Rectitude] replied, 'I can answer you, Christine, that there are certainly a great many virtuous ladies of France, and I would be more than pleased if they were among our citizens. First of all, the noble queen of France, Isabella of Bavaria, will not be refused, reigning now by the grace of God, and in whom there is not a trace of cruelty, extortion, or any other evil vice, but only great love and good will toward her subjects.'<sup>22</sup>

But the *Livre de la cité des dames* with its idealized sketches offers little detail on the day to day difficulties of functioning as a mediator in fifteenth-century France. In accordance with its purpose of offering women a glorious past, the work makes no mention of the problems Isabeau faced when she attempted to keep the peace among Charles's relatives during his periods of 'illness'. The *Livre des trois vertus*,

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<sup>20</sup> On the myth that Isabeau's adultery led to doubts over Charles VII's legitimacy, see Charles T. Wood, *Joan of Arc and Richard III: Sex, Saints and Government in the Middle Ages* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), Chapter 7, pp. 125–51. As for Isabeau's allegedly scandalous behaviour, see Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue*, pp. 41–43.

<sup>21</sup> In an unpublished article, 'Isabeau de Bavière and the Political Philosophy of Christine de Pizan', Karen Green refutes the common notion that Christine held a low opinion of Isabeau, arguing that Isabeau fell victim to the misogynistic forces Christine fought against throughout her writing career. Green writes, 'Isabeau's subsequent historical fall from grace can be seen as resulting from the tendencies that Christine was attempting to combat. Rather than having been portrayed as a queen who tragically alienated both sides in a struggle where her aim was to promote herself and her children as the legitimate site of power and the means of a peaceful resolution, Isabeau has been cast as a frivolous and venal non-entity who destroyed the crown of France by her promiscuity. By accepting this myth, even female commentators have robbed Christine of a good part of her political significance.'

<sup>22</sup> *Cité des dames*, III. 68, p. 422; *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. by Earl Jeffrey Richards (New York: Persea, 1982), p. 212. Other positive references, principally those contained in Harley 4431, presented to Isabeau in 1411, are analyzed by Green.

however, frequently characterized as a practical companion book to the *Livre de la cité des dames* for women of all levels of society, narrates a more complex story that foregrounds the paradoxical status of female mediators (and the paradoxical roles of females at all levels of society). In this context it becomes clear why Isabeau's mediating failed. When the princess or noblewoman's husband because of bad counsel or some other cause wants to burden his people with taxes, the *Livre des trois vertus* explains, the people will seek the princess out as an intercessor, because they know her to be bounteous, merciful, and charitable. She will receive them courteously (without making them wait too long), and she will listen to them so sympathetically that they will depart satisfied. Then she will speak so wisely and courteously to her husband that he will be convinced to repeal his tax, either totally or partially, and his reign will be peaceful and splendid. When war threatens, it is the job of the princess, 'd'estre moyenne de paix et de concorde, et de travailler que guerre soit eschivee pour les inconveniens qui avenir en peuent' [to be the means of peace and concord, to work for the avoidance of war because of the trouble that can come of it].<sup>23</sup> The reason for this is that women are by nature peace makers, while men, strong and quick to action, fail to think of the consequences of their actions:

Et ad ce doivent aviser principaulment les dames, car les homes sont par nature plus courageux et plus chaulx, et le grant desir que ilz ont d'eulx vengier ne leur laisse aviser les perilz ne les maux qui avenir en peuent. Mais nature de femme est plus paoureuxse et aussi de plus doulce condicion, et pour ce, se elle veult et elle est saige, estre peut le meilleur moyen a pacifier l'omme, qui soit. (p. 35)

[Ladies in particular ought to attend to this business, for men are by nature more courageous and more hot-headed, and the great desire they have to avenge themselves prevents their considering either the perils or the evils that can result from war. But women are by nature more timid and also of a sweeter disposition and for this reason, if they are wise and if they wish to, they can be the best means of pacifying men.] (p. 51)

Here Christine echoes the traditional understanding of the princess's role as intercessor for the people.<sup>24</sup> She is the necessary supplement to kingship. How does she exert her crucial influence? Writes Christine, the princess will urge the prince and his council to examine the situation carefully before declaring war, given the evil that might result. Or she will intervene between the prince and warring lords who threaten social disruption, reproaching them and:

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<sup>23</sup> *Le Livre des trois vertus*, ed. and introd. by Charity Cannon Willard (Paris: Champion, 1989), p. 35. When the page number is indicated, translations are from Christine de Pizan, *The Treasure of the City of Ladies or the Book of the Three Virtues*, trans. and introd. by Sarah Lawson (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1986), p. 51; otherwise the translation is mine.

<sup>24</sup> On the queen as intercessor see John Carmi Parsons, 'Ritual and Symbol in the English Medieval Queenship to 1500', in *Women and Sovereignty*, ed. by Louise Olga Fradenburg (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), pp. 60–77.

disant que le mesfait est moult grant et que a bonne cause en est le prince indignéz, et que s'entente est de s'en vengier si comme il est raison, mais nonpourtant elle, quiouldroit tousjours le bien de paix, ou cas que ilz seouldroient amender ou en faire amande convenable, mettroit volentiers peine d'essaier, se pacifier les pourroit vers son seigneur.' (pp. 34–35)

[saying that the misdeed was very serious and that the prince is quite justifiably offended by it and that he has decided to avenge himself for it, as is only right, but nevertheless she, who would always wish the blessing of peace, in the event that they would wish to atone for it or to make suitable amends, would gladly go to some trouble to try if she could by some means to make peace between them and her husband.] (p. 51)

But to what extent are the princess's mediating efforts likely to be taken seriously by those commanding the armies? Far from collecting successful examples of mediation, the *Livre des trois vertus* offers little reason to believe that the intervening princess will have any effect. The scriptures are filled with examples of successful mediation, Christine assures her readers. But as for historical examples, she offers none, claiming that in the *Livre de la cité des dames* she has provided examples. Turning to this work, however, one finds numerous examples of praiseworthy historical princesses of France, but only one tale of a successful mediator for peace, Queen Blanche (II. 65. 1).

The princess has only one option for behaviour, as the *Livre des trois vertus* stresses, which is constantly to radiate goodness. When this fails to achieve the desired effect, she has no recourse. Above all, she must never let her husband or the court sense anxiety or disappointment behind her cheerful demeanour. For example, when her husband loves another woman, the wise princess will know to hide her feelings: 'dissimuler saignement sans faire semblant que elle s'en aperçoive et que elle n'en scet riens' (p. 55) [to conceal wisely without showing that she is aware of it and that she knows anything about it]. Or when she is wrongly abused by those in power, once again, she should pretend not to notice. When 'elle aperçoive et sache que aucun ou aucunes personnes poissans ne lui vueillent point de bien [...] et qui lui nuïroient s'ilz pouoient et l'esloigneroit de l'amour et de la grace de son seigneur [...] ou la mettroient par leurs faux rapors mal des barons, des subgiéz ou du people, elle ne fera de ce nul semblant que s'en aperçoive, ne que les repute ne tiengne ses anemis' (p. 63) [When she realizes that some powerful person or persons do not wish her well [...] and who if they could they would hurt her and damage her relationship with her husband [...] and who would through false reports put her in a bad light with the barons, subjects or people, she will not show that she notices, nor that she considers them her enemies]. What hope is there that a figure whose very success depends upon the public's perception of her unfailing gentleness and calm will influence factions at war over territory, power, and honour?

The *Livre des trois vertus*, then, exposes the paradoxical nature of female intervention, society's only check on male vengefulness. Society demands that women intercede, but leaves men free to disregard their advice. When this is the

case, women must bear the failure cheerfully. If her dealings cause her to be despised, she must accept public vilification with equal grace. Christine's motive in exposing the limitations of female intervention seems to be to make a moral point: that the problems of the world, at all levels of society, are the fault of men. On the other hand, even if they are deprived of political authority, women possess tremendous moral authority. In other words, the purpose of the book is not to urge women to involve themselves politically. Rather, by stressing the essential similarity of women's positions and responsibilities, the book momentarily allows the community of all women to gather together, so to speak, to quietly acknowledge and give thanks for their own superiority to the violence they see all around them. Depictions of the mediating princess expose the injustice of woman's position to readers and also teach them about feminine virtues.

The perception among Christine's modern readers of Isabeau as blithely unconcerned by the gathering storm is due in part to Christine's *Une Epistre a la royne de France* (1405), which constructs its addressee as an aloof figure. In this epistle, Christine appears to appeal to Isabeau's self-interest as she tries to convince the queen to mediate between the warring Duke of Orleans and John of Burgundy. Treating her as if she has failed to notice the tumultuous events going on around her. Christine insists that if Isabeau achieves peace for France, three goods will accrue to her: first the benefit to her soul, second, the pleasure of benefiting her people, and, third, the good reputation she will secure.<sup>25</sup> This plea has left modern readers with the impression of an Isabeau who actually possesses the power to effect peace but perversely refuses to do so:

Trés redoubtee Dame, ne vous soit doncques merueille se a vous—qui, au dit et opinion de tous, povez estre la medecine et souverain remede de la garrison de ce royaume a present playé et navré piteusement, et en peril de piz—ore se trait et tourne, non mie vous supplier pour terre estrange, mais pour vostre propre lieu et naturel heritaige a voz très nobles enfans. Très haute Dame et me très redoubtee, non obstant que vostre sens soit tout adverti et advisié de ce qu'il appartient, touteffoiz est-il vray que vous, seant en vostre trosne royal couronné de honneurs, ne povez savoir, fors par autrui rappors, les communes besoingnes, tant en paroles comme en faiz, qui queurent entre les subjez. Pour ce, haulte Dame, ne vous soit grief oïr les ramentevances en piteux regrais des adouléz supplians François, a present reampliz d'affliccion et tretteuse, qui a humble pitié vueille monstrier a vostre begnin cuer leur desolacion et misere, pay cy que prochaine paix entre ces .II. haultz princes germains de sanc et naturelement amis, mais a present par estrange Fortune meuz a aucunce contencion, ensemble veuilliez procurer et empetrer.

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<sup>25</sup> Quotations and translations from *Une epistre a la royne de France* and *Lamentacion sur les maux de la guerre civile* from Josette Wisman's edition and translation of *The Epistle of the Prison of Human Life With an Epistle to the Queen of France and Lament on the Evils of the Civil War* (New York: Garland, 1984).

[Most Revered Lady, do not therefore wonder if to you—who, according to everyone's opinions and beliefs, can be the medicine and sovereign remedy for this kingdom now so pitifully wounded and injured, and in danger of worse—I turn and come, not to beg on behalf of a foreign land, but on behalf of your own land and natural heritage of your very own noble children. Most High and Reverend Lady, although your mind is well aware and told of what it should know, it may nevertheless be true that you, seated on your royal throne surrounded with honours, cannot know, except by someone's report, the common problems, in words as well as in facts, which prevail upon your subjects. For this reason, High Lady, do willingly hear the complaint and pitiful regrets of the suffering and suppliant French people now full of affliction and sadness, and who cry with tearful voices to you, their supreme and revered Lady, praying, by the mercy of God, that a humble pity may show to your tender heart their desolation and misery, so that you can proceed and obtain peace soon between these two princes of the same blood.] (pp. 70–73)

One critic describes the *Epistre* as Christine's 'letter addressed to Queen Isabeau on 5 October 1405, to remind the frivolous lady of her duties to France [...]'.<sup>26</sup> But Isabeau certainly had heard the laments of her people, and was indeed doing her best to bring about a peace treaty between the warring princes of the blood. In the manuscripts, the letter is preceded by an introduction explaining that Christine sent this letter to the queen at Melun where she and the Duke of Orleans had assembled a large party of soldiers, while the Duke of Burgundy did the same in Paris, as that city and the rest of the kingdom waited in terror of the impending destruction. Peace was re-established thanks to the mediating efforts of several members of the royal family: 'A l'aide de [...] ducs de Berry et de Bourbon avecques eulx le conseil du Roy, bone paix y fu trouvée, et se departirent les gens d'armes d'un costé et d'autre' [With the help of [...] the Dukes of Berry and Bourbon and with them the council of the king, peace was made, and the soldiers for both sides departed] (p. 70). The introduction does not mention the presence of the queen, but the Religieux de St-Denis notes that she presided over the negotiations, having received instructions from Charles VI on 12 October that she was to continue to serve as mediator in the conflict.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Charity Cannon Willard, 'Christine de Pizan: From Poet to Political Commentator' in *Politics, Gender and Genre: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Margaret Brabant (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), p. 17. See also Leppig, 'The Political Rhetoric of Christine de Pizan', pp. 147–48: 'Christine regards the queen's inaction as a betrayal of her female nature and of her position, both of which should compel her to act, but she places particular emphasis on the queen's functions and duties within the body politics, referring to her as the mother of the heirs of France and protector of their heritage. The title of queen invests her with an undisputable sovereignty and authority, which not only give her the right to interfere but also ensure success for the peace efforts if she were to try: 'se à droit te veulx de la paix entremettre?' Obviously it is not true that Isabeau possessed the sovereignty and authority to guarantee her success, and certainly Christine would not have believed that she did.

<sup>27</sup> See Verdon, *Isabeau de Bavière*, pp. 142–44, and also Jacques d'Avout, *La Querelle des*

Unfortunately, these efforts did not achieve enduring peace. The restless truce they instigated came to an end with the assassination of the Duke of Orleans in November 1407, and much worse was still to follow.

What, then, was the point of the letter? Certainly it was not to spur the queen to action: Isabeau was actively mediating already. Rather, its purpose was ideological, similar to that of the *Livre des trois vertus*. Christine emphasizes Isabeau's liminal position, a position that permits her to function as an intermediary between the people and the warring dukes in a symbolic sense. Although Christine elevates the 'trés haulte, puissant et très redoubtee Dame', she immediately draws attention to Isabeau's outsider status by explaining that she, Christine, is no *foreign* supplicant soliciting the queen. This allusion forcefully reminds the audience of Isabeau's Bavarian roots and of the fact that she had been solicited by 'foreign' lands in the past. But even as Christine emphasizes Isabeau's foreignness, she transforms the queen into a spokesperson for the French community, for the address continues with 'but on behalf of your own land and natural heritage of your very own noble children', effacing the difference between Isabeau and the French people and distancing her from the warring princes, who care nothing for their 'children'.

Moreover, in soliciting Isabeau to act as peacemaker among the horde of much more powerful authorities all engaged in mediating (as d'Avout reports, the Kings of Navarre and Sicily, the Duke of Berry, the University of Paris, and of course, the enemies themselves, were all involved in multiple negotiations, pp. 80–81). Christine highlights the queen's marginal position. Clearly the assertion that Isabeau 'can proceed and obtain peace soon between these two princes of the same blood' (p. 73) is absurd if taken literally. Instead, it is a device to arouse feelings of community among the powerless and shame the warring dukes. Isabeau's position, then, is important in ideological terms, for it lends her the authority to act as a voice for the people, even though the queen is severely limited in diplomatic terms.

Christine employs a similar strategy in the *Lamentacion*, which captures the strife five years later, when peace had become all the more elusive. Here the queen is just one among an array of powerless potential intercessors apostrophized within the letter. First Christine offers herself in her 'seulette à part' persona as a voice of the French community. Then she calls upon individual knights, demanding to know what they have to gain from destruction, but quickly relieving them of responsibility—they are simply acting as soldiers. She next urges the ladies of France to cry, as Christine herself is already doing, and beat their hands. To this impotent company, Christine adds the queen:

Hé! Roïne couronnee de France, dors-tu adés? Et qui te tient que tantost celle part n'affinz tenir la bride et arrester ceste mortel emprise? Ne vois-tu en balance l'eritage de tes nobles enfans? Tu, mere des nobles hoirs de France, redoubtee princesse, qui y

puet que toy, ne qui sera-ce, qui a ta seigneurie et auctorité desobeira, se a droit te veulx de la paix entremettre?

[Oh, crowned Queen of France, are you still sleeping? Who prevents you from restraining now this side of your kin and putting an end to this deadly enterprise? Do you not see the heritage of your noble children at stake? You, the mother of the noble heirs of France, Revered Princess, who but you can do anything, and who will disobey your sovereignty and authority, if you rightly want to mediate a peace?] (pp. 88–89)

The answers to Christine's ironic rhetorical questions hardly need be articulated. The queen was doing anything but sleeping, and clearly the response to 'who will disobey you' is that 'the warring dukes will disobey your sovereignty and authority if you rightly want to mediate a peace', just as they always do. A line of broken peaces between the princes lends the ironic apostrophe a profound bitterness, but it is not directed at Isabeau. After the queen, Christine calls upon wise men of the realm, instructing them to add their dissenting voices, and with them clerics to 'walk in procession and pray devoutly'.

John of Berry, having begun to believe that John the Fearless was a direct threat to the entire royal family, signed on with the Armagnacs in April 1410, and it is to him that Christine addresses her final plea. In the summer of 1410 he was mounted and ready to lead men against the Burgundians. He is thus the only addressee of the *Lamentacion* with any serious ability to influence the course of the war. Stop before it is too late, Christine urges him: 'Or viens doncques, viens, noble duc de Berry, prince de haulte excellence, et suy la loy divine qui commande paix! Saisy la bride par grant force, et arreste ceste non honorable armée, au mains jusques a ce que aus parties ayes parlé' [So, come, come, Noble Duke of Berry, Prince of High Excellence, and follow the divine law which orders peace! Take a strong hold of the bridle, and stop this dishonourable army, at least until you have talked to the parties] (pp. 90–91).

Once again, it is important to stress that contrary to the impression Christine's epistle has left with modern readers, Isabeau was not somnolently neglecting her duties. During this period, she was energetically although fruitlessly mediating. As the confederation of Armagnacs marched upon Paris Charles of Orleans and John the Fearless began diplomatic action by requesting the queen to help with negotiations. A futile meeting took place between Isabeau, the princes and other mediators at Marcoussis in September. As Monstrelet describes the situation:

Et venoient chascun jour les dessusdiz princes, ou aucuns d'eulx, devers elle. Et jà soit ce que diligimment, pour les mener à conclusion de paix avecques le Roy son seigneur, elle tendoit, néanmoins elle n'en peut venir à son entencion. Car iceulx seigneurs estoient fermez et délibérez d'aler devers le Roy à puissance, pour lui remonstrer et requerre qu'il feist justice et prinst autre gouvernement. Et pour ce

ladcite Royne se parçeut qu'elle traveilloit en vain, retourna à Paris avec sa compaignie, et racompta ce qu'elle avoit trouvé.<sup>28</sup>

[And the princes, mentioned above, came every day, or some of them, to her. And no matter how diligently she worked to make peace between them and the king her lord, she could not fulfil her intention. Because these lords were decided and determined to make war against the king, to reproach him and require him to do justice and appoint another government. And for this reason, the queen understood that she was working in vain, and returned to Paris with her company and recounted what she had discovered.]

Finally on 2 November 1410, the Duke of Berry accepted the Peace of Bicêtre. The lack of seriousness with which the agreement was entered into, however, is evidenced by the fact that the Dukes of Berry, Bourbon, and Orleans were among a group signing a new alliance against John the Fearless that very evening.<sup>29</sup> Inevitably, in the following months the war broke out again.

What is the point of urging the queen to intervene when she is already fully involved? I would suggest that in these two epistles, Christine's purpose is ideological. She addresses Isabeau as mediator-queen for the purpose of offering her to a wide audience as an emblem of solidarity between the royal family and the community French men and women, all suffering because of the war. Her purpose is not to rouse the already-active Isabeau to action, but to position her with respect to those responsible for the war.

### *The 'Livre de paix'*

The emphasis upon 'contemporary history' by Christine and her contemporaries observed by Claude Gauvard and others is nowhere more obvious than in Christine's *Livre de paix*, composed for the fifteen-year-old dauphin, Louis of Guyenne, who was facing the impossible job of maintaining the fragile peace he had just helped mediate between the Armagnacs and Burgundians at Auxerre in August 1412. Although he has not suffered the extreme unpopularity of his mother, Louis is not beloved by modern readers, either. The general consensus holds him to be a bit of a wastrel, an opinion based upon contemporary chronicles.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Enguerrand de Monstrelet, *La Chronique d'Enguerran de Monstrelet*, ed. by L. Douët-d'Arcq, 6 vols (Paris: Renouard, 1857–62), II, pp. 91–92.

<sup>29</sup> On the futility of the Peace of Bicêtre see d'Avout, *La Querelle des Armagnacs*, pp. 126–27 and Richard Vaughan, *John the Fearless: The Growth of Burgundian Power*, (London: Longman, 1966), pp. 82–84.

<sup>30</sup> See the assessments of Nicolas de Baye and the Religieux of St-Denis, cited by Willard in the '*Livre de la Paix*' of Christine de Pisan (The Hague: Mouton, 1958), pp. 30–31.



But the *Livre de paix* holds out Louis as the hope of the French people. The work begins on a celebratory note, declaring its own purpose and proclaiming the recent peace: 'l'ennortement de continuacion de paix à mondit seigneur de Guienne sus la vertu de prudence et de ce que elle requiert en gouvernement de prince' [the exhortation to my lord of Guyenne to continue the peace under the virtue of prudence, and the sort of government this requires of the prince] (*Paix*, I. introduction, p. 57). Yet the introduction strikes an ominous chord, for Christine reveals here that Louis was unable to maintain the original peace, and that she laid down her pen after completing only the first book, 'pour cause de matiere de paix defaillie' (*Paix*, I. introduction, p. 57). But peace returns, and she takes up Part II where she left off, 'apres les convenances de paix rejurées en la ville de Pontoise' [after the peace accords re-sworn in the city of Pontoise] (*Paix*, I. introduction, p. 57). The purpose of Part II, like that of Part I, she continues, is 'l'ennortement dudit Monseigneur Guienne et de tenir les princes en amour' [the exhortation to the said Lord of Guyenne that he maintain love between the princes] (*Paix*, I. introduction, p. 57).

This work, then, like the *Livre des trois vertus*, forcefully inscribes the paradox of mediation. Like the princess of this work, Louis is urged to influence by winning love and respect through personal virtue. In addressing how to maintain peace between the unruly princes in Chapter 3 of Part I, Christine echoes the advice she had earlier given to the princess in the *Livre des trois vertus*, assuring the dauphin that through his goodness he will soften the hardened hearts of the princes and thus maintain the peace between them:

C'est que tu soies entre eulx tousjours moien de conduire voies de paix par si gran douceur, non pas sans plus un moys ou deux maiz à tousjours, que leurs cuers actraies et actendresses tellement que le runge de la rancune passée tant pour l'amour de toy et de ta douceur comme pour le bien d'eulx meismes soit du tout effacié et tourné en amour, benivolence et union ensemble.

[That you always be the means of peace between them by your great sweetness, not just for a month or two, but forever, that you attract and soften their hearts so much that the bitterness of the old hatred will be completely wiped out for love of you and your sweetness, for their own good, and will be transformed into love, benevolence, and union.] (*Paix*, I. 3, p. 63)

But like the princess of the *Livre des trois vertus*, Louis has no power to enforce the peace, which is interrupted by a reprisal of hostilities the spring after the Treaty of Auxerre and the Cabochien Revolution.

The 'paix defaillie' to which Christine refers in her introduction does not cause her to re-evaluate her basic approach to mediation. In Chapter 3 of Book II, she takes up the same exhortation that Louis keep the peace between his warring relatives by appealing to their love for him. But after the 'false start' signalled in the introduction, what reason was there to hope that things would ever be any different—that additional treaties would succeed, including the second one described

in the *Livre de paix*, the Treaty of Pontoise? D'Avout attributes the futility of the Treaty of Auxerre to the absence of any enforcement mechanism, describing the agreement as 'sans valeur, puisqu'il manque au sommet du bel édifice l'autorité continue, seule capable d'en faire respecter les dispositions' [without worth, since there is lacking at the peak of the fine edifice continuity of authority capable of making its decisions respected].<sup>31</sup> Even if the dauphin could be convinced to behave virtuously, how was he to assume a position from which he could effectively exercise justice according to Christine's wise advice when the problem was precisely that he could not enforce the peace treaties he had helped to negotiate between his relatives? Charles of Orleans was not likely to abandon his quest for justice, nor was John the Fearless likely to heed terms that did not suit him. A letter from a merchant of Lucca to his city magistrates underlines how powerful John seemed to contemporaries: 'You may be quite sure that the Duke of Burgundy will remain the most influential and powerful prince of this kingdom. His power is based on the troops which he can raise in his lands. He can muster so many that he fears no one.'<sup>32</sup> The presumed love the princes bore the dauphin and the mutual hatred that Louis had attempted to transform into love, the 'alliances and protestations of friendship which accompanied the peace of Auxerre, the marriage alliances of Burgundy and Bourbon, the peace-league of Burgundy, Bourbon, Orleans, and Vertus, the alliance of Burgundy and Berry, not to mention the treaty itself, the mutual banqueting, and the episode of John the Fearless and Charles of Orleans riding together on the same horse', were all weaker than the rivalry between the two factions.<sup>33</sup> Dominating such powerful opponents would require more than virtue. It is also worth noting that contemporary observers, aware of the uselessness of the repeated interventions, had suggested sterner measures than loving mediation. The Religieux of St-Denis writes that representatives from the University of Paris called upon the king just before the signing of the Peace of Bicêtre to deliver their assessment of the situation. They insisted that the hatred between the dukes was implacable and that the only way out of the escalating violence was to remove both of them from power and replace them with wise men devoted to the public welfare.<sup>34</sup>

The fact that Christine writes the break in peace into the *Livre de paix* and that she continues to advise the dauphin to mediate lovingly between the princes suggests that she was seeking to create a particular effect in the text rather than to forward mediation as a serious solution to the problem of the civil war. For if Christine's take on mediation seems naïve, the majority of the *Livre de paix* exemplifies the practical tenor of Christine's advice; it does not simply assume that personal virtue equates with effective leadership. In this work, which Berenice Carroll describes as

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<sup>31</sup> D'Avout, *La Querelle des Armagnacs*, p. 158.

<sup>32</sup> Vaughan, *John the Fearless*, p. 138.

<sup>33</sup> Vaughan, *John the Fearless*, pp. 97–98.

<sup>34</sup> D'Avout, *La Querelle des Armagnacs*, pp. 125–26.

Christine's 'first attempt at a systematic analysis of the requirements of peace and the practical policies necessary to achieve it in the monarchical nation-state'.<sup>35</sup> Christine offers Louis a model of kingship based upon the exercise of different virtues, all of which she in effect defines as procedural, in Forhan's terms: prudence (careful attention to good advisors), justice (consistent application of the law), and 'clemence, liberalité, et verité' (wise handling of the people) (*Paix*, I. introduction, p. 57). What to make of the lack of practical advice on mediation, then? For while it is true, as Carroll writes, that Christine's political theory 'went well beyond a simplistic notion that a "virtuous prince" is all that is necessary for peace', Christine does forward the dauphin's personal goodness as the only solution to the problem of the warring princes, itself a prerequisite for a smoothly functioning society.<sup>36</sup>

Christine's account of the peace Louis presumably mediated at Auxerre should be read as serving an iconic function. Part I opens with 'Une Louenge a Dieu a cause de la paix' 'Praise to God because of the peace'. Peace has returned to a France mired in civil war, Christine writes, because God has seen fit to send a child, the fifteen-year-old dauphin, Louis of Guyenne, 'seul enfant inspiré en bouche et en fait de ton saint esperit, par lequel [...] t'a pleu par benigne paix garir, saner, et curer la mortelle playe de dure hayne et l'effusion de sang tres horrible ja toute enmeillié de ton catholique royaume de France' [only a child, inspired of tongue and deed by your Holy Spirit by means of whom [...] You chose through benign peace to heal, restore the health, and cure the mortal wound of implacable hatred and horrible bloodshed that had disrupted your Catholic kingdom of France] (*Paix*, I. 2, p. 59). During the reading of the gospel of St John, 'Et multi in nativitate ejus gaudebunt', Louis suddenly turned to his confessor with a joyous face and announced that this would be a wonderful day to establish peace! And shortly thereafter, gathering a great assembly of warring troops and their leaders together, with the aid of God, Louis transformed 'dueil en joye, mort en vie, hayne en amour' [sorrow into joy, life into death, hate into love] (*Paix*, I. 2, p. 61).

Clearly Louis, dauphin, but not yet king, an adolescent whom both factions seek to control, is a liminal figure. Thus Christine embraces him as a mediator, illuminating his goodness against the background of chaos and evil and presenting him as a figure through whom the voices of the people can make themselves heard. Specifically, the story of Louis's divine inspiration and the resulting peace as Christine recounts it is the beginning of a narrative of nation that finds its roots in the present community as opposed to a distant, mythical past.<sup>37</sup> In this context, Louis represents a return of the type of leader the French have lacked since the death of Charles V—a leader who like Charles V forms in his person a link between the

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<sup>35</sup> Carroll, 'On the Causes of War and the Quest for Peace', p. 344.

<sup>36</sup> Carroll, 'On the Causes of War and the Quest for Peace', p. 344.

<sup>37</sup> On this trend in writing see Stephen G. Nichols, 'The Narrative of Nation. Political Allegory in 14<sup>th</sup>-Century France' *Romanisches Jahrbuch*, 51 (2000), 153–78 (p. 177).

divine and the people. The war between the Armagnacs and Burgundians will end some day; what will remain is the image of Louis, virtuously striving to bring harmony to his family, founding a new nation based on peace. Although not immediately successful, he will prevail eventually. In his role as mediator, then, like Isabeau, he stands beyond the conflict but simultaneously forms a conduit between the divine and the community.

In Part I, Christine dresses Louis in his royal vestments, although he is not yet king, reminding the audience that he will one day acquire the sacred nature of the king. In the meantime, she depicts him as royally crowned with virtue, surrounded by 'bons, loyaulx, et sages, nobles preudesomes' [good, wise, and noble gentlemen] who have taught him since his infancy, and whose only goal is to see Louis as king, dressed 'entierement de droit habit royal, c'est assavoir de l'aournement qui à ta tres noble haultesse aduit et appartient' [exactly as is right in royal robes, that is, in the adornment suitable to and belonging to your noble majesty] (*Paix*, I. 4, pp. 63–64). This adornment, in fact, is spiritual: the wreath of virtue.

With Louis's image as saviour king established, Christine offers a series of exempla in which Charles V figures. The comparison is particularly relevant because Charles V too was called upon to lead the country when he was still very young. But if he was young in years he was mature in spirit, Christine had earlier proclaimed in the *Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*, a work whose ideology of kingship she summons up through reference in the *Livre de paix*. In the *Livre des fais et bonnes meurs* Christine had described Charles as superior to nature. It is natural for youths to be high-spirited, 'lorsque la chaleur et moisteur est grant' [when heat and moisture are great].<sup>38</sup> But Charles had avoided youthful folly.

In offering Charles V as a model, the *Livre de paix* asks the fifteen-year-old Louis to assume the maturity of his grandfather: to participate in his wisdom. But while Christine offers sound and practical advice in many of her Charles V exempla, the exempla also signify iconically. To understand their full meaning, it is important first to examine the textual universe of the *Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*, which might be characterized as infused with the presence of a communicative God. In such a setting human beings have access to knowledge about God's will and are able to exercise their own free will to reflect their divine exemplar to a greater or lesser degree. In this world, Charles V served as mediator between the earthly and the divine. Forming a crucial link in the micro-macrocosm, he was a spectacularly successful king because he received order from above and transmitted it throughout his kingdom. In Part I, an exposition of Charles's 'noblee de courage,' Christine makes clear how literally she understands Charles V's status as a link between the microcosm of the kingdom and the macrocosm. The first section of Part I is devoted to order, moving from the private—Charles V's personal order—to the public and positive effects of his personal order upon his realm. Thus

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<sup>38</sup> *Fais et bonnes meurs*, I, p. 24.

Chapter 15 is entitled, 'Cy dit comment le roy Charles establei l'estat de son vivre en belle ordenance' [Here is told how the King Charles established lovely order in his own living]. This is followed by the slightly broader Chapter 16, 'Cy dit exemple de princes vertueux et de vie bien ordenencée, ramenant à propos du roy Charles comment en toutes choses estoit [bien] riglé' [Here are given examples of virtuous princes living beautifully ordered lives, recalling the theme of how Charles was well ordered in all things]. In Chapter 19, Christine reveals how the same principle of order that Charles demonstrates in his personal behaviour becomes a public virtue: 'Cy dit l'ordenence que le roy Charles tenoit en la revenue et distribucions de rentes de son royaume' [Here is described the order in which Charles maintained revenues and distributions of payments in his kingdom]. Christine refers to the order embodied in Charles's person in her advice to the Dauphin to regulate his own life in the *Livre de paix*. 'Et ainsi que tu oys', she writes, 'la prudence de cellui roy se demonstroit tant par le fait du gouvernement de son estat et persone comme en tous les autres generaulx affaires' (*Paix*, I, 8, p. 72) [And as you hear, the prudence of this king was demonstrated as much in the government of his life and person as in all other more general affairs].

But this is not the world of the *Livre de paix*, a world devastated by war, where resemblance to the Creator has been lost. How then to regain this lost paradise, this regulated realm with its beautifully ordered king? Like Galahad, Charles surpasses human limitation. But crucially, like Galahad, he owes his goodness to genealogy and God. Christine writes that the wise king was:

anobli de nature par longue genealogie continuée en triomphe, avec de Dieu par grace doué de noblesce de courage, laquelle lui fist delaissier ignorance en jeune aage, par vertu née d'admonnestement de grant discrecion, jugiant et cognoissent les folz delis estre prejudiciable, dampnables et hors ordre de fame deue à digneté et trosne royal, desirant delaissier les choses basses et tendre aux hautes beatitudes (*Fais et bonnes meurs*, I, p. 37)

[ennobled of nature by a long and continuous genealogy, graced by God with noblesse of courage, which caused him to abandon ignorance at a young age, by virtue born of caution and great discretion, judging and recognizing foolish delights to be prejudicial, damnable and unworthy of the fame due dignity and the royal throne, desiring to leave low things and reach for lofty blessings]

Louis possesses the genealogy, and, as Christine insists, he is inspired by God. Thus imitating Charles is not simply a matter of assuming his wise ruling style, although it includes that. But Louis, who will assume the sacred nature of kingship through his coronation and anointing, will naturally imitate Charles. Kingship is ritualistic, a feature Christine emphasizes when she writes of Charles's clothing. When he matured, Christine explains, he changed his attire, laying aside 'les habiz jolis, vagues et curieux' [pretty, whimsical and curious clothing] and revealing his sacred kingly nature through his 'habit royal et pontifical, sage et imperial, comme affiert à tel digneté' [royal and pontifical vestments, wise and imperial, as appropriate to such

dignity].<sup>39</sup> From this point on he reflects ‘haultes choses’ in his habits, his attire, and his virtue, and this personal order exerted a positive regulating effect upon society. A good and even holy man and therefore a good ruler, reigning over a kingdom characterized by order and peace, Charles V acquired the universal love of all; as Christine writes, ‘il acqueroit l’amour universelle de toute personne’.<sup>40</sup>

Through her exempla of Charles’s reign, Christine describes the France that should be. Perfect by the grace of God, Charles V has little to offer the ruler in the way of practical advice on how to bring the warring princes to peace. But still he serves an important function, recalling the sacred nature of the king, a nature that Louis will assume when he ascends the throne. Christine’s narrative of Louis’s mediation reminds the dauphin and readers of the tremendous unseen forces backing him. Powerful earthly forces undermine his attempts, and he falters, but this should not deter him: he is the true leader. He need only pick up the shreds of royal dignity and revitalize them, following in the footsteps of his grandfather, who was also a youth when responsibility devolved upon him:

O! qui pourroit parler de plus prudent de lui ne mieulx moriginéz et en toutes choses plus parfait? Car dès en fleur de juenece, par grace de Dieu, avisant par grant prudence que c’est chose comme noble et tres necessaire à prince, quelque soit le petit nombre des ans, avoir cuer meur et congnoissance de ce que est a faire et ce que est à laisser, delaissa tous le meurs des juenes, se disposant du tout en ce que sagesse enseigne. (*Paix*, I. 6, p. 68)

[Oh! Who could speak of anyone more prudent than he, or better trained and in all things more perfect? For since the flower of his youth, by the grace of God, recognizing by his great wisdom that it is noble and very necessary for a prince, however young, to have a mature heart and knowledge of what should be done and what should be put aside, he abandoned the ways of youths, availing himself of everything that wisdom teaches.]

### *The Impossibility of Mediation*

Christine had no faith in the activity of mediating as a literal way of solving conflict. For her, the mediator was not at all likely to succeed. Rather, the mediator served a crucial emotional function, offering the people a powerless and yet righteous figure behind whom to position themselves as they awaited the return to power of their leader. Perhaps Christine’s view of the futility of mediation as a way of resolving conflict is most clearly expressed in the *Chemin de long estude* (1405). In this work,

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<sup>39</sup> *Fais et bonnes meurs*, I, p. 37.

<sup>40</sup> *Fais et bonnes meurs*, II, p. 31. I am indebted to Nadia Margolis for suggestions about royal ideology and Charles V.

the world below is in such a deplorable state that Mother Earth ascends into Heaven to complain to Reason that her creatures are out of control. They have:

foy aucune.  
 Entr'eulx, aincois s'entretahissent,  
 Detrayent et portent rancune  
 Et mortellement s'anvayssent.<sup>41</sup>

[They have no faith in each other, but betray each other, slander each other, bear anger, and attack each other fatally].

The root of their disorder is 'convoitise' [greed]. Obsessed with earthly power to the exclusion of any virtue, they behave 'unnaturally' and have destroyed the world. The cause of this bad behaviour and possible remedies for it are not obvious, however. Who is at fault? Is humanity guilty? Is the problem the result of a faulty system? Or is it the result of the incompetent rulers mediating between the earthly and celestial levels? The work lays out the problem in terms of the conflict between predetermination and free will, embodied in four celestial ladies, Sagesse, Noblesse, Chevalerie, and Richesse. Initially Christine leads the reader to believe that the ladies, part of a larger group of characters peopling the heavens, are conduits who simply reflect what is passed to them from above. The character Sibylle observes that 'ceulx reçoivent / Leurs commandemens comme ilz doivent, / Obeïssans sans derouter' [they receive their commands as they ought, obeying without question]. But later, their leader Reason accuses them of negligence and instructs them severely to start behaving more reasonably (p. 254, lines 2835–43). Are the ladies responsible for the chaos on earth or are they simply passing down orders from above? The argument soon turns to Reason, who is herself accused of causing the disorder. After all, she has abandoned the world, pushed to despair by humanity's failure to behave reasonably. Is she derelict or simply following divine command?

A debate among the four celestial ladies leads to the conclusion that the only way to achieve peace below is to choose a single king under whom all the world will be united. A heavenly council is called to help choose this king, but the members are incapable of reaching agreement upon the critical question of who this king should be. Therefore they remand the decision to a lower court, sending it back to earth. The work's final anecdote refers to the Judgement of Paris scene as a positive example of conflict resolution—that is, the handing over of a dispute among goddesses to a mortal for adjudication. The example of Paris's resolution does not bode well, one would think.

The narrator Christine is selected as a mediator to present this option of a world-wide king to her friends, the princes of the earth, and ask them to decide who it should be. But the problem is that the difficulty with feudalism in general and the problem peculiar to the war between the Armagnacs and the Burgundians was

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<sup>41</sup> *Long estude*, p. 242, lines 2635–38.

precisely that a decision could not be reached on who should rule in the absence of the king. In other words, Christine the narrator in her role as mediator is descending into a situation that cannot possibly be resolved by the interested parties, and this, I would suggest, is the point of the work, for it ends with Christine still hovering in the air, the case unresolved.

Like the *Livre des trois vertus*, the *Chemin de long estude* accurately renders the futility of mediation. Called upon to perform the impossible, the mediator is powerless to remedy social ills. Painfully aware of the limitations they face, Christine does not literally press her mediators into tasks they cannot accomplish. Rather, through her depiction of these liminal figures she reminds the community of the French of their essential solidarity. A firm believer in hierarchies, Christine is not promoting 'utopias' wherein social boundaries disappear, and she certainly does not advocate mob rule. Rather, she calls upon the people for their moral force. In response to an intolerable situation brought on by the civil war, she sets up the aggregation of the people, led by royal representatives, in moral opposition to the warring princes.



## *Petit estat vesval*: Christine de Pizan's Grieving Body Politic

LOUISE D'ARCENS

In this chapter I wish to explore the intersection between the politics of Christine de Pizan's literary authority—that is, the strategies she deploys to promote the authoritative status of her texts—and her literature of political authority. Of particular interest in this literature is her articulation of active roles for women within the medieval polity, and feminized models of the state. Through an examination of these texts, focusing in particular on her political epistles, I will analyze how Christine's claim to literary authority relates to and in fact underwrites her bid for more concrete forms of feminine political authority. My examination dwells chiefly on Christine's complex evocation of a range of Marian traditions, and in particular that of the *mater dolorosa*, not only to authorize her voice in a number of texts but also to offer models of political agency for women.

In his study of the intersection between literary and political authority, Larry Scanlon states that 'medieval *auctoritas* in the textual sense is not easily detached from *auctoritas* in the public sense'.<sup>1</sup> This same belief informs much feminist scholarship on the ideological nature of medieval textuality, where acknowledgement of the connection between literary *auctoritas* and more concrete power relations has become commonplace. At a more specific level, much feminist work discussing Christine de Pizan rests on the assumption that her work challenges not only the anti-feminist textual tradition, but also the social and institutional inequalities buttressed by this tradition. Kevin Brownlee, for instance, describes Christine's writing as not only a 'discursive act', but also 'a political act, an attempt to influence the course of events'.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, in a statement that forcefully links

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<sup>1</sup> Larry Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power: The Medieval Exemplum and the Chaucerian Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> Kevin Brownlee, 'Structures of Authority in Christine de Pizan's *Ditie de Jehanne*

literary and non-literary authority Joël Blanchard argues that Christine's legitimization of her work gains her entry into 'the area of public interest', where '[h]enceforth legitimization takes on a different meaning from that of a literary bias. It will lead to claims of a more universal, more captivating nature.'<sup>3</sup>

In order to investigate the intersection of literature and politics in relation to Christine, it is worth considering what models or concepts of political authority would have been available and significant to her. I want to suggest that Christine relies heavily on the notion of influence as a legitimate, if unofficial, form of authority. Of special importance here is the relationship in medieval political and legal theory between the two forms of power known as *potestas* and *auctoritas*. Often referred to as the *duo sunt* or 'two swords'<sup>4</sup> model, after Pope Gelasius's designation of the relationship between papal and imperial pre-eminence, this dichotomous formulation of power was significant up to the end of the medieval period.<sup>5</sup> The relationship between these powers has been the focus of much twentieth-century scholarly debate, concerning such questions as the extent to which they overlapped, which took precedence over the other, and so on.<sup>6</sup> There are two points, however, on which scholars generally agree. The first of these is that

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*d'Arc*', in *Discourses of Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, ed. by Kevin Brownlee and Walter Stephens (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1989), pp. 131–50 (p. 146).

<sup>3</sup> Joël Blanchard, 'Compilation and Legitimation in the Fifteenth Century: *Le Livre de la cité des dames*', in *Reinterpreting Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Earl Jeffrey Richards and others (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1992), pp. 228–49 (247). The idea of late medieval French poets' involvement in politics is discussed more generally in Blanchard, 'L'entrée du poète dans le champ politique au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Annales ESC*, 41 (1986), 43–61.

<sup>4</sup> 'Duo sunt' is used by Robert L. Benson in 'The Gelasian Doctrine: Uses and Transformations', in *La notion d'autorité au moyen âge: Islam, Byzance, Occident: Colloques Internationaux de la Napoule. Session des 23–26 octobre 1978*, ed. by George Makdisi, Dominique Sourdél, Janine Sourdél-Thomine (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1982), pp. 13–44, while 'two swords' is used by Alan Cottrell in 'Auctoritas and potestas: A Re-evaluation of Gelasius I on Papal–Imperial Relations', *Mediaeval Studies*, 55 (1993), 95–109 (p. 105).

<sup>5</sup> Benson, Cottrell, Scanlon, as well as Stephen Kuttner in 'On 'Auctoritas' in the Writing of Medieval Canonists: The Vocabulary of Gratian', in *La notion d'autorité*, pp. 69–81, all locate the high Middle Ages as the period where the *auctoritas/potestas* dichotomy was most fully theorized. Scanlon mentions that it 'continued to have force to the end of the Middle Ages' (*Narrative, Authority, and Power*, p. 38). Benson also says 'without too much exaggeration, one can say that till about 1200 and at least in some respects thereafter, medieval political thought consisted of glosses on, and reactions to, Gelasius's doctrine' ('The Gelasian Doctrine', p. 13).

<sup>6</sup> For a brief overview of twentieth-century 'duo sunt' scholarship, see Cottrell, 'Auctoritas and potestas', p. 97.

*auctoritas* was regarded as a legitimate form of political power operating alongside *potestas*. The second is that the essential difference between the two powers lies in their respective levels of formal power.

*Potestas* has been summarized as administrative executive power by Scanlon,<sup>7</sup> and 'administrative power to regulate behaviour' by Alan Cottrell.<sup>8</sup> Its reliance on statutory ratification emerges most strongly in Stephen Kuttner's definition of it as 'a legally recognized force to command, forbid, and enforce'.<sup>9</sup> Conversely, although *auctoritas* could also entail some concrete capacities, its force is generally presented as issuing through the medium of influence. Scanlon formulates the distinction between them along the lines of the dichotomy of official 'power' and its less tangible but equally effective counterpart 'ideology'. He calls *auctoritas* a 'complex ideological structure', going on to say '*auctoritas*, if politically constraining, was also ideologically empowering'.<sup>10</sup> Other definitions offered by scholars include Kuttner's 'imponderable dignity or charisma' and Cottrell's description of it as 'eminent personal prestige' and 'the personal ability to shape events because of one's social, economic, or even political influence'.<sup>11</sup> This last description definitively locates *auctoritas* in the domain of ethico-political action, rather than that of institutional government.

The *auctoritas/potestas* division is not introduced here as a prescriptive schema for analyzing feminine authority in Christine's work. Its function is of a more heuristic character, serving to raise some important points, the most vital of which is that medieval political authority was not simply formulated in terms of intransigent official structures, but was more flexible, accommodating the strategic use of informally recognized influence. Political agency in the form of influence was therefore potentially open to those located outside the legally recognized sphere of *potestas*. This will become significant further into my discussion, when I examine the central place Christine gives to unofficial authority and influence within her formulations of female political agency.

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<sup>7</sup> Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power*, p. 38.

<sup>8</sup> Cottrell, '*Auctoritas* and *potestas*', p. 99.

<sup>9</sup> Kuttner, 'On '*Auctoritas*' in the Writing of Medieval Canonists', p. 75. He argues that, particularly if referring to individuals, *auctoritas* could imply official power, or could be vested in someone with such power (p. 73). Benson's account of the changing medieval interpretations of the two powers also points to the difficulty of arriving at a definitive understanding of their relationship. In terms of medieval views on which power took precedence for whom, Benson discerns three main hermeneutic traditions: hierocratic, dualist, and royal theocracy (p. 37).

<sup>10</sup> Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power*, pp. 44, 51.

<sup>11</sup> Kuttner, 'On "*Auctoritas*" in the Writing of Medieval Canonists', p. 73; Cottrell, '*Auctoritas* and *Potestas*', pp. 99, 101.

At a more specific level, I introduce the *auctoritas/potestas* distinction here also because scholars examining authority in Christine's texts have tended not to specify their use of this term. Even Maureen Quilligan, who has arguably gone furthest in analyzing Christine's feminine authority, evinces some reticence in definitively characterizing this authority. When situating it vis-à-vis legal and textual traditions, she is clear as to its exteriority, describing it as 'alternative', 'nontextual' and 'extra-legal'.<sup>12</sup> However, elsewhere it is possible to detect her indecision about the nature of this authority, and the capacities and functions it encompasses. In an attempt to define this notion more clearly, then, I will attempt throughout this discussion to specify the nature and ambit of the feminine authority offered in a range of Christine's texts, particularly in those pertaining to her immediate political milieu, and to articulate the relationship between this model of authority and her formulation of an alternative, feminized body politic. Lastly I will consider the extent to which Christine as a writer embodies her own vision of political authority.

Before examining these issues, I will now turn to an examination of Christine's ethically-oriented concept of the political, for it is this, with its complex interweaving of public and private capacities, that grounds her representation of women's political agency and the role of the feminine in the medieval body politic.

### *Tu es politique: Auctoritas as Ethico-politics*

Tu es politique, car tu aprens a bien vivre.

[You are politic(al), for you teach how to live well.]<sup>13</sup>

When thanking Dame Philosophie for her advice in *Advison-Cristine*, Christine admiringly identifies her with 'toutes sciences' (all knowledges). Among these 'sciences' is that of 'politique' (politics), a term Christine glosses as the knowledge of living well (*bien vivre*). This connection of politics with the more personal moral practice of 'living well' is of special importance here, as it reveals the intrinsically ethical dimension of Christine's conception of politics. This is reinforced by the fact that the phrase 'car tu aprens a bien vivre' is a syntactically reversed echo of Christine's earlier rationale for identifying Philosophie with 'ethique' [ethics]—that is 'car bonne vie et honneste que tu formes et aprens' [because of the good and lawful life that you fashion and teach].

This correspondence of ethics and politics is also reflected in the use of allegory in *Advison-Cristine*. By aligning her own complaint in Part III with France's complaint in Part I, Christine ensures that Philosophie's advice of 'paciencia' is

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<sup>12</sup> Maureen Quilligan, *The Allegory of Female Authority* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 111, 112.

<sup>13</sup> *Advison*, III, 27, p. 140 (p. 142).

extended not only to her, but also to the sphere of national politics. The analogy is underlined at the level of address in Philosophie's alternating use of 'tu' and 'vous' throughout her consolation speech.<sup>14</sup> Liliane Dulac also points to the existence of a semantic relation between ethics and politics by arguing for the co-existence of ethical and political levels *within* the word 'politique'.<sup>15</sup> According to Dulac, this word not only refers to the 'science' of politics, but also carries the double adjectival resonance of 'politic' (*politique*)—a quality closely related to the indispensable ethical quality of prudence—and 'political' (*politique*), which pertains to the sphere of government.

The correspondence of personal ethics and political government remains a constant theme throughout Christine's work. In her 1399 *Epistre au dieu d'amours*, Cupid regards the respectful treatment of women as an issue of national conduct:

Comme il est droit et si com faire doit  
Noble pays ou gentillece regne.

[That's right, that's what a noble land must do,  
A country in which gentle breeding rules.]<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, in her final work, the 1429 *Ditié de Jehanne d'arc*, the 'joie nouvelle' [new joy] experienced by the long-cloistered Christine is directly linked to a political event, France's victory over England under the leadership of Joan of Arc.<sup>17</sup>

Because of the breadth of her conception of the political, one fundamental difficulty involved in analyzing Christine's political writings is definitional. The reader is presented with the fact that, to some degree, virtually all of her texts contain some commentary on either the operation of, or conduct within, the public sphere. Even amid the elegant courtliness of her early *Cent balades*, there are elements of political critique, as in the *balade* that deploys an *ubi sunt* theme to contrast the

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<sup>14</sup> See Rosalind Brown-Grant, who discusses Christine's 'cross-referencing of levels' in *Advision-Christine* in her article 'L'Avision Christine: Autobiographical Narrative or Mirror for the Prince?' in *Politics, Gender and Genre: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Margaret Brabant (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), p. 105.

<sup>15</sup> Liliane Dulac, 'Authority in the Prose Treatises of Christine de Pizan: The Writer's Discourse and the Prince's Word', in *Politics, Gender and Genre*, p. 130.

<sup>16</sup> *Dieu d'Amours*, pp. 34–35, lines 26–27. Fenster and Erler's translation here successfully renders Christine's words into idiomatic English, especially in the phrase 'that's right'. However, I offer the alternative translation 'As is right, and thus as must happen' for l.26. While it is less idiomatic in English, it captures the emphatic simplicity of Cupid's description of the respectful treatment of women as 'right', and highlights his argument on the political necessity of doing that which is ethically 'right'. Furthermore, while this translation loses the internal rhyme pattern of 'droit' and 'doit', it retains an echo of the elegant phonetic doubling of the French text.

<sup>17</sup> For another discussion of this, see Brownlee, 'Structures of Authority in Christine de Pizan's *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*', p. 134.

'sage' and 'prudent' values of the Emperor Octavian with the 'flaterie' of contemporary courtiers, thereby discreetly criticizing the behaviour of contemporary courtiers.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, among the *Autres balades* we find the *chançon royal* addressing 'princes poissans' [powerful princes], reminding them that 'c'est pechié' [it is a sin] for a leader to 'glaive contre son pueuple affile' [raise his sword against his people].<sup>19</sup> These political poems were placed alongside not only her courtly love poems but also, as I shall discuss later, her *poèmes de veuvage* or grieving poems, to form collections that forge a link between public and private domains.

Although political, legal, and public elements abound throughout Christine's *œuvre*, there are a number of her texts that can more readily be defined as 'political' in that they focus directly on leadership, nationhood, warfare and peace. A number of them, such as *Epistre a la royne*, *Lamentacion sur les maux de la guerre civile*, *Le Livre de paix*, *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*, and *Le Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*, are characterized by Hicks as comprising 'ideas of a clearly political cast [...] feeling for the reality of concrete events and [...] an avowed interventionist design'.<sup>20</sup> These texts articulate explicit responses to events taking place in Christine's immediate political milieu. They offer direct commentary and counsel on, and even attempt to intercede in, the internal strife of war-torn France. Christine's clearest statement concerning this political purpose appears in the *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*, where she describes herself as 'doing my duty by means of the written word'.<sup>21</sup> Still other texts by Christine such as *Epistre d'Othea*, *Le Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*, *Le Livre de corps de policie*, *Le Livre des fais d'armes et de la chevalerie*, and *Le Livre des trois vertus* (also known as *Le Trésor de la cité des dames*) offer more general political counsel by means of historical *exempla*, advice on the education of the prince, advice on warfare, and a model for the structure of the state.

In analyzing these more manifestly political works, we recognize that while Christine is indeed a pioneering voice in the history of women's secular political writing, she of course draws heavily upon the genres, motifs, *exempla*, and

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<sup>18</sup> Balade 93, pp. 93–94. See also Judith Ferster's Introduction to *Fictions of Advice: The Literature and Politics of Counsel in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996) for a sound discussion of the need to look for subtle political critiques within texts.

<sup>19</sup> From *Autres Balades*, in *Oeuvres poétiques de Christine de Pisan*, I, pp. 207–69; verse 49, pp. 263–64. The translation is by Richards in 'Seulette a part—The "Little Woman on the Sidelines" Takes Up Her Pen: The Letters of Christine de Pisan', in *Dear Sister: Medieval Women and the Epistolary Genre*, ed. by Karen Cherewatuk and Ulrike Weithaus (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 138–70 (p. 151). See the same essay, pp. 150–52, for a discussion of the *chançon royal* form.

<sup>20</sup> Eric Hicks, 'The Political Significance of Christine de Pisan', in *Politics, Gender and Genre*, p. 9.

<sup>21</sup> *Prison Epistre*, p. 5.

arguments found in earlier *auctores*. Nevertheless, despite her reliance upon masculinist precedents, in a number of her political texts Christine actively encourages women's participation in affairs of state, formulating authoritative roles for them in national and civic domains.<sup>22</sup> As will be demonstrated, it is out of these forms of feminine authority that she develops, and enacts, a form of political engagement that is also distinctly feminine.

In *Le Livre des trois vertus*, for instance, Christine offers a polity that is distinctly feminized. In claiming this, I am not suggesting that Christine replaces an exclusively masculine polity with a similarly exclusive feminine one, but rather that she takes as her subject of discussion the ways in which women can and do contribute to public life. While the organic metaphor is absent, the motif of interdependency figures largely, not only between women of different ranks, but between women and men, with many women being encouraged to involve themselves in their husbands' professional lives. And while, as Willard points out, this text has been interpreted as belonging to the genre of late medieval courtesy treatises for women, it differs from them both in the broad social spectrum of women it addresses, and, most importantly, in Christine's concern with 'encouraging [women] to stand on their own two feet, to make some sort of contribution to society, to dominate the conditions of their lives that make or break them'.<sup>23</sup>

The *Trois vertus* does not only urge women's greater participation in public life. It is also possible to see Christine articulating a role for women at the highest level of politics. That this text was at least in part intended as a political *speculum* is strongly suggested by Christine's citation (I. 20, p. 77). of the *Policraticus* when advocating the virtue of largesse in the princess's administration of public affairs. Moreover, the career of *Trois vertus* in Portuguese politics indicates that that it was regarded, at least in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as a mirror for princesses, rather than simply a courtesy manual. As Robert B. Bernard has suggested, it was in fact regarded as an invaluable source of political advice for women. According to Bernard, the *Trois vertus* is thought to have been introduced into Portugal as a gift to Isabel, the future queen, from her aunt the Duchess of Burgundy, who sought to provide advice for Isabel during a time of discord between members of the royal

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<sup>22</sup> See Marie-Thérèse Lorcin, 'Christine de Pizan analyste de la société', in *The City of Scholars. New Approaches to Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Margarete Zimmermann and Dina De Rentiis (Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 1994), pp. 197–205, for an account that discusses the *Trois vertus* [*Trésor*] in terms of both its conservative view of social hierarchy and its progressive attempt to offer advice to 'femmes de toutes conditions' (p. 203). This point is echoed by Kate Langdon Forhan, *The Political Theory of Christine de Pizan* (Burlington, VT; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), p. 45.

<sup>23</sup> Charity Cannon Willard, *Christine de Pisan: Her Life and Works* (New York: Persea, 1984), p. 146.

family.<sup>24</sup> And Willard has discussed the influence that it had on a later book of advice for a princess, that written by Anne de France for her daughter Susan.<sup>25</sup>

Precisely the sort of advice Isabel required exists in Part I of the *Trois vertus*, in the section advising the princess on how to prevent war between her husband and other princes or barons:

Ceste dame ne s'en souffrira pas a tant, ains fera tnt que elle parlera ou fera parler [...] a celluy ou ceux qui auront commis le mesfait; les en preprendra en poignant et en oignant, disant que le mesfait est moult grant et que a bonne cause en est le prince indignéz, et que s'entente est de s'en vengier si comme il est raison, mais nonpourtant elle, qui vouldroit tousjours le bien de paix, ou cas que ilz se vouldroient amender ou en faire amende convenable, mettroit volentiers peine d'essaier, se pacifier les pourroit vers son seigneur [...] laquelle chose est le droit office de sage et bonne royne et princepce d'estre moyenne de paix et de concorde, et de travailler que guerre soit eschivee pour les inconveniens qui avenir en peuent [...] se elle veult et elle est saige, ester puet le meilleur moyen a pacifier l'omme, qui soit.

[The good lady will not rest until she has spoken, or has had someone else speak to those who have committed the misdeed in question, alternately soothing and reproving them. While their error is great, and the prince's displeasure reasonable, and though he ought to punish them, she would always prefer peace. Therefore, if they would be willing to correct their ways or make suitable amends, she gladly would try to restore them to her lord's good graces [...] The proper role of a good, wise queen or princess is to maintain peace and concord and to avoid wars and their resulting disasters [...] if she has sufficient will and wisdom she can provide the best possible means to pacify man.]<sup>26</sup>

Here Christine promotes a crucial role for women in the spheres of both national and international diplomacy; a role which has its foundation in feudal notions of woman as intermediary between her lord and his vassals. The function of feminine intercession is fundamental to an understanding of Christine's political thought, for it is out of this that she develops her sophisticated formulation of feminine political authority.

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<sup>24</sup> Robert B. Bernard, 'The Intellectual Circle of Isabel of Portugal, Duchess of Burgundy, and the Portuguese Translation of *Le Livre des Trois Vertus* (*O Liuro dos Tres Vertudes*)', in *The Reception of Christine de Pisan from the Fifteenth through the Nineteenth Centuries: Visitors to the City*, ed. by Glenda K. McLeod (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1991), pp. 43–58.

<sup>25</sup> Charity Cannon Willard, 'Anne de France, Reader of Christine De Pizan', in *The Reception of Christine de Pisan from the Fifteenth through the Nineteenth Centuries: Visitors to the City*, ed. by Glenda K. McLeod (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1991), pp. 59–70.

<sup>26</sup> *Trois vertus* I. 9, pp. 34–35; *A Medieval Woman's Mirror of Honor: The Treasury of the City of Ladies* I. 9 (trans. by Willard, p. 86).



Petit estat vesval: *Intercession, Widowhood and Political Authority*

One of the fullest articulations of the authority of woman as political intermediary is found in *L'Epistre a la royne*. This epistle is interesting in that it has a three-fold purpose: it functions simultaneously as Christine's own attempt at immediate political amelioration, as her attempt to encourage another woman, Isabeau, to intervene in a political situation, and, in Richards's words, as 'a short treatise on women's mediating role in politics'.<sup>27</sup> Writing on 5 October 1405, amidst the escalating tension of the Burgundy–Armagnac discord, Christine pleads with Queen Isabeau to intervene, and 'pay cy que prouchaine paix entre les II. haulz princes germains de sanc' [obtain peace soon between these two princes of the same blood] (pp. 72–73). Going on to provide such biblical *exempla* as Esther and Bathsheba, as well as accounts of French queens whose diplomacy averted warfare, Christine states that 'il appartient a haute princesse et dame estre moyennerresse de traictié de paix' [it behooves a high princess and lady to be the mediator of a peace] treaty (pp. 76–77). Christine's appeal to Isabeau's feudal intermediary role, reflected in the use of such courtly literary formulae as 'haulte Dame' [high lady] and 'très excellent et redoubtee Dame' [Excellent and Revered Lady] (pp. 72–73) perhaps explains Christine's use of the elevating 'vous', a mode of address she abandons in the *Lamentacion sur les maux de la guerre civile*. In this text, Isabeau, accused of having forsaken her role as 'moyenerresse', is addressed as 'tu'.

This formulation of female and especially queenly authority in terms of political intercession is, of course, far from unique to Christine. Recent studies in medieval queenship are unanimous in locating the queen's authority in her capacity to appeal to the king on behalf of his subjects. The informal nature of this authority is emphasized in statements such as John Carmi Parsons's that 'medieval society was generally unwilling that a queen should acquire any share in her husband's authority'.<sup>28</sup> Elsewhere he claims that the queen, in her capacity as *uxor regis* or royal consort, 'could wield manipulative influence to great effect',<sup>29</sup> although he

<sup>27</sup> Richards, 'Seulette a part—The "Little Woman on the Sidelines" Takes Up Her Pen: The Letters of Christine de Pizan', p. 163.

<sup>28</sup> John Carmi Parsons, 'The Queen's Intercession in Thirteenth-Century England', in *Power of the Weak: Studies of Medieval Women*, ed. by Jennifer Carpenter and Sally-Beth Maclean (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), pp. 147–77 (p. 147).

<sup>29</sup> See John Carmi Parsons, 'Ritual and Symbol in the English Medieval Queenship to 1500', in *Women and Sovereignty*, ed. by Louise O. Fradenburg (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), pp. 60–77 (p. 60). This same point is made by Peggy McCracken, in 'The Body Politic and the Queen's Adulterous Body in French Romance', in *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature*, ed. by Linda Lomperis and Sarah Stanbury (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 38–64, and by Elizabeth McCartney in 'Ceremonies and Privileges of Office: Queenship in Late Medieval France', in *Power of the Weak*, pp. 178–219.

stresses that the implicitly sexual nature of this influence rendered it suspect.<sup>30</sup> Carla Freccero similarly describes the *droit de grâce* (right of clemency) associated with medieval queenship as the 'authority to negotiate'.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps the most emphatic statement on this subject is Lois L. Huneycutt's claim that 'the power of a medieval queen rested on a perception of influence rather than any institutional base'.<sup>32</sup>

This emphasis on intercessionary influence is significant because it becomes apparent that the queen's authority corresponds with the flexible model of *auctoritas* discussed at the beginning of this paper. It is interesting in light of this that Parsons conceptualizes an opposition between 'kingly authority and queenly influence'.<sup>33</sup> Parsons's dichotomy demonstrates that a model equating authority with officially held power functions to deny political authority to many medieval women. It is precisely in order to highlight the power they did have that I have stressed the legitimacy of personal influence within medieval political thought.

The intercessionary function bestowed upon the queen a symbolic form of the princely seigneurial authority discussed in Part I of *Le Livre du corps de policie*. In Christine's work this feminized seigneurial authority is figured in her use of a familial metaphor for the state. In *Epistre a la royne*, the queen's accountability to her people is represented as the accountability of a mother to her children.<sup>34</sup> This is most clearly expressed in the claim that:

tout ainsi comme la Royne du ciel, mere de Dieu, est appelee mere de toute chretienté, doit estre dicte et appelee toute saige et bonne royne, mere et confortarresse, et advocate de ses subjez et de son pueple.

[just as the Queen of Heaven, Mother of God, is called mother of all Christians, so must be said and called any wise and good queen, mother and comforter, advocate of her subjects and her people.]<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Carmi Parsons, 'The Queen's Intercession in Thirteenth-Century England', pp. 158–59, 162.

<sup>31</sup> Freccero, 'Marguerite de Navarre and the Politics of Maternal Sovereignty', in *Women and Sovereignty*, pp. 132–50.

<sup>32</sup> Lois L. Huneycutt, 'Intercession and the High Medieval Queen: The Esther Topos', in *Power of the Weak*, pp. 126–46 (133).

<sup>33</sup> Carmi Parsons, 'The Queen's Intercession in Thirteenth-Century England', pp. 160–61.

<sup>34</sup> Again, this was not unique to Christine. See, for instance, Freccero's discussion of Marguerite de Navarre's conception of 'maternal authority' of the queen, in 'Marguerite de Navarre and the Politics of Maternal Sovereignty', pp. 132–50.

<sup>35</sup> *Prison/Epistre*, p. 78 (p. 79).

<sup>36</sup> Quotations in French are from *Le Livre du corps de policie*, ed. by Angus J. Kennedy, *Etudes christiniennes*, 1 (Paris: Champion, 1989); all English translations are from *The Book of the Body Politic*, trans. by Kate Langdon Forhan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

This metaphor is crucial in its elaboration not only of a specifically feminine political function of protection and advocacy, but also in its recourse to the authority of Marian intervention. Of special interest in Christine's use of this comparison in *Epistre à la royne* is the fact that in exhorting Isabeau to action she does not mention Mary's virginity, but rather, as she has in the *Cité*, she evokes those Marian designations that correspond most closely to the roles undertaken by Isabeau—that is, Mother of God, and, importantly, *Regina coeli*, 'la Royne du ciel'.

Of course any form of authority Christine formulated for women relied for its plausibility on her establishing an authoritative speaking position for herself. Without this, any declaration of women's authority in the public sphere would be undermined. Moreover, Christine's writing is remarkable for the consonance between her general assertions of female authority and her specific claims concerning the authority of her own voice. Christine had already used Marian discourse to authorize her writing practice as a woman, and especially as a mother, most famously in the opening scene of the *Cité des dames*. Christine's deliberate alignment of herself with the unsuspecting Virgin of Luke's Annunciation has been attested to in a number of studies. More significant for my argument is Christine's purposeful adaptation of medieval Annunciation imagery in this scene. Just prior to the appearance of Reason, Rectitude, and Justice, who commission her to build the City of Ladies, Christine is roused from her lassitude by 'a ray of light', which, she says, falls 'sus mon giron' [on my lap].<sup>37</sup> This ray of light motif was commonly used in Annunciation iconography,<sup>38</sup> including the contemporary *Belles heures* and *Très riches heures* of the Duke of Berry, in which the light falls on the Virgin's head.<sup>39</sup> However the fact that in Christine's Annunciation, the light falls not on her head, but on her lap, is crucial to her attempt to authorize her text as the product of a female author; for as V. A. Kolve argues, in thus altering iconographic tradition Christine acknowledges that the body she writes out of has conceived and given birth.<sup>40</sup> Thus

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<sup>37</sup> *Cité des dames*, I. 1. p. 40 (trans. by Richards, p. 6).

<sup>38</sup> For further discussions of this, see Leo Steinberg "'How Shall This Be?'" Reflections on Filippo Lippi's *Annunciation* in London, Part I', *Artibus et Historiae*, 8 (1987), 25–44 (pp. 32, 43 n. 28); and Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, trans. by Janet Seligman, 2 vols (Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1971), pp. 45–46.

<sup>39</sup> See *Belles heures de Jean de Berry*, Metropolitan Museum of Art New York, fol. 30, *Les Très riches heures du Duc de Berry*, reproduction of Musée Condé, Chantilly, ed. by Jean Longnon, Raymond Cazelles, and Richard Meiss (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969), plate 21. Maureen Curnow, in *Le Livre de la cité des dames*, ed. by Maureen Curnow (Vanderbilt University: *Dissertation Abstracts International*, (1975–76) 4536–37A, pp. 424–34, mentions that visual representations of the ray of light are not in earlier manuscripts of the *Cité des dames*, but appear later in the fifteenth century.

<sup>40</sup> V. A. Kolve, 'The Annunciation to Christine: Authorial Empowerment in *The Book of the City of Ladies*', in *Iconography at the Crossroads: Papers from the Colloquium Sponsored by the Index of Christian Art, Princeton University 23–24 March, 1990*, ed. by Brendan

the locus of creative inspiration, and reception of the divine *Logos*, is expressly situated in the female site of parturition, rather than in its metonymic counterpart, the ear of the *conceptio per aurem* tradition.<sup>41</sup> The ray of light thus not only illuminates Christine's study, but also quickens her (pro)creative power, which is located in her loins.<sup>42</sup>

In his sensitive reading, Kolve locates the ray of light in Christine's lap as an assertion of both her similarity to, and fundamental embodied difference from, the Virgin. He says '[Christine] too is called on to conceive a true (or truer) Word, but as a widow and mother, not as a virgin mother or perpetually chaste bride'.<sup>43</sup> According to this interpretation, Christine asserts her creative authority not simply as a woman, but as a woman with an individual history and embodiment that would have been familiar to her earliest court audiences. This claim to Marian authority with regard to the specific nature of her own embodiment and social status offers an ingenious manoeuvre whereby Christine, whose audience knew her to be a widow and mother, can liken herself to the Virgin who, in Luke 1. 34, says 'how can this be, seeing I know not a man?'

The intricate Marian authority embedded in the opening scene of the *Cité des dames* presages Christine's extensive deployment of a range of Marian discourses to lend authority to her voice as a writer. It is, however, unusual in her *oeuvre* for its comparison of the author to the youthful Virgin of the Annunciation. Indeed, as Bernard Ribémont has recently argued,<sup>44</sup> Christine does not often dwell on the details of her own motherhood. Rather, among the personal details found in Christine's texts it is her widowhood that features most prominently and abidingly. In sentiments similar to Kolve's, Willard emphasizes the importance of this aspect of Christine's personal history to her early writing. She states that Christine's early verse not only gave her 'an outlet for her grief', but also suggests that 'the most

Cassidy (New Jersey: Princeton University, Department of Art and Archaeology, 1993), pp. 171–96 (p. 180).

<sup>41</sup> For discussions of this tradition, in which the Virgin was believed to have conceived Jesus through the ear by listening to the words of the angel, see Steinberg, "'How Shall This Be?'"', pp. 26–28; and Johannes Vriend, *The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Medieval Drama of England* (Purmerend: J. Muusses, 1928), esp. Chapter 15, "'Conceptio Per Aurem" and Similar Phrases as Used in Middle English Literature', pp. 150–60. For pictorial representations, see Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, figs 85, 105.

<sup>42</sup> The 'giron' is also presented as the site of the reception of knowledge in *Advision*, p. 92, where Philosophie fills Christine's lap with treasures from her coffers, and in *Long estude*, p. 44 line 1021, where Aristotle is described as having 'empli son giron' (filled his breast) the waters of the Fountain of Sapience.

<sup>43</sup> V. A. Kolve, 'The Annunciation to Christine', p. 181.

<sup>44</sup> See 'Christine de Pizan et la figure de la mère', in *Christine de Pizan 2000*, ed. by John Campbell and Nadia Margolis (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), pp. 149–61.

original of her poems are those expressing her own emotions as she continued to mourn the loss of her husband.<sup>45</sup>

Among these grieving poems are the famous Balade 11, 'Seulete suy et seulete vueil estre' [all alone am I, and all alone I wish to be],<sup>46</sup> as well as her *rondeau* that begins and ends 'Je suis vesve, seulete, et noir vestue' [I am a widow, all alone, and dressed in black] (lines 1, 7, 12, pp. 148–49), and Balade 14, in which she mourns the loss of 'mon ami mort' [my dead friend] (line 9, pp. 15), and in which each stanza ends with the refrain 'a tousjours mais je pleureray sa mort' [For his death shall I weep forever more] (lines 7, 14, 21, pp. 15). In her prose allegories *Livre de la mutacion de Fortune*, and *Advison* she speaks with remarkable candour about the changes wrought in her life by her widowhood, glowingly remembering 'mon mary, jeune preudomme saige et prudent' (p. 99) [my young husband, and man of great wisdom and prudence], and lamenting his untimely death and the responsibilities she was left to shoulder alone. Similarly, as Liliane Dulac has noted, Christine's advice to widows in *Trois vertus*, despite the pragmatic flavour of its advice, is marked by a tone of empathy for those women 'despoillees [...] de voz mariz' [deprived [...] of your husbands].<sup>47</sup> Christine's empathy for her fellow-widows is, however, most touchingly apparent in the closing remarks of the *Cité des dames* when, listing the attributes necessary for widows to live well, she mentions 'paciencia—qui bien besoing y a—force et resistance en tribulacions et grans affaires' [patience (so necessary!), strength, and resistance in tribulation and difficult affairs] (III. 19, p. 500; p. 256).<sup>48</sup> The parenthetical interjection '(so necessary!)' adds a note of poignant candour to Christine's customarily stoic approach to this subject.

While these texts contain material and sentiments recognizably drawn from Christine's own life, we should, as Barbara Stevenson has most recently reminded us, remember that these are public courtly performances of private grief.<sup>49</sup> Thirty-five years before Stevenson, Daniel Poirion described this as Christine's creation, in her capacity as professional woman writer, of a public 'personnage triste' [a

<sup>45</sup> Willard, *Christine de Pizan: Her Life and Works*, p. 53.

<sup>46</sup> In *Oeuvres poétiques de Christine de Pisan*, I, p. 12. All of the grieving poems referred to here are from this volume.

<sup>47</sup> See Liliane Dulac, 'Mystical Inspiration and Political Knowledge: Advice to Widows from Francesco da Barberino and Christine de Pizan', trans. by Thelma Fenster, in *Upon My Husband's Death: Widows in the Literature and Histories of Medieval Europe*, ed. by Louise Mirrer (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1992), pp. 223–58 (p. 229). Dulac provides a detailed catalogue of Christine's references to her own widowhood and widowhood in general.

<sup>48</sup> All quotations are from *Le Livre de la cité des dames*, ed. by Richards, followed by reference to the translation by Richards.

<sup>49</sup> Barbara Stevenson, 'Revisioning the Widow Christine de Pizan', in *Crossing the Bridge: Comparative Essays on Medieval European and Heian Japanese Women Writers*, ed. by Barbara Stevenson and Cynthia Ho (New York: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 29–44.

melancholy character].<sup>50</sup> Without denying the biographical interest of her remarks on this subject, it is also important to examine the extent to which the emphasis she places on her own widowed status is crucial to the development of her literary persona, and forms another part of her deployment of Marian tropes in the bid for a specifically literary form of authority.

Examining the larger body of Christine's available writings, it becomes clear that the *topos* of tearfulness is used repeatedly. In her early *balades* and *rondeaux*, for instance, Christine speaks often of her 'trés pleureux visage' [most tearful face] (l. 10, line 10), and her 'dolente vie' [doleful life] (l. 151, line 5). Similarly, in the Annunciation scene of the *Cité des dames*, one finds Christine seated amongst her books, 'les yeulx plains de larmes' [my eyes filled with tears] (l. 2, p. 46; p. 6), while in *L'Epistre a la royne*, also written in 1405, she opens with a reference to 'la voix plourable de moy' [this tearful voice of mine] (pp. 70–71). This *topos* continues throughout later works as well. In *Prison de vie humaine*, Christine opens by describing the 'flus de lermes' [flood of tears] (pp. 2–3) flowing from herself and the women of France, while in *Lamentacion sur les maux de la guerre civile*, she cannot restrain 'les lermes qui ma veue troublent et comme fontaine affluent sur mon visage' [the tears which blur my sight and pour down my face like a fountain] (pp. 84–85). Lastly, in the opening lines of Christine's final work, the *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*, she refers to herself as 'Christine, qui ay plouré / XI ans en abbaye close' [Christine, who have wept for eleven years in a walled abbey].<sup>52</sup> Although this tearfulness initially seems to function more as a dramatic, individuating detail (and in the epistles, conforms to the dictaminal exordium or engaging opening scene), enhancing her voice's melancholy tone, the repeated appearance of tears at the beginning of her texts suggest that they constitute one of Christine's more important self-authorizing gambits.

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<sup>50</sup> Daniel Poirion, *Le Poète et le prince: l'évolution du lyrisme courtois de Guillaume de Machaut à Charles d'Orléans* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965), p. 252. See also Anne Paupert, 'Le "Je" lyrique féminin dans l'œuvre poétique de Christine de Pizan', in *Et c'est la fin pour quoy sommes ensemble: hommage à Jean Dufournet. Littérature, histoire et langue du Moyen Age*, ed. by Jean-Claude Aubailly, Emmanuèle Baumgartner, Francis Dubost, Liliane Dulac, and Marcel Faure (Paris: Champion, 1993), III, pp. 1057–71 (p. 1062), who borrows Michel Zink's concept of a 'mise en scène du moi' (theatre of the self) to describe Christine's public autobiographical *persona*.

<sup>51</sup> All references to the Old French edition and Modern English translation of *L'Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*, *Une Epistre a la royne de France*, and *La Lamentacion sur les maux de la guerre civile* cite page numbers from *Lamentacion sur les maux de la guerre civile*, *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*, and *Epistre a la royne*, ed. and trans. by Josette A. Wisman (n. 21 above).

<sup>52</sup> *Ditié* I, lines 1–2, p. 28 / translation, paragraph I, p. 41.

I am, of course, not alone in noticing this recurrent motif. Nadia Margolis has also devoted passing remarks to Christine's 'lachrymose personae',<sup>53</sup> but her focus is not on the significance and political efficacy of this persona for the author. Others, such as Richards, Mary McKinley, and especially Linda Leppig, are more attentive to the political nature of Christine's deployment of this *topos*, linking it to a range of biblical *auctores*.<sup>54</sup> The meaning of Christine's tears emerges most clearly in *Prison de vie humaine*. In searching for a remedy for the women of France, and for France itself, Christine recalls what had been a consolation 'a mon petit estat vesval' [to my humble widowed estate] (pp. 2–3). Here Christine directly links the tears that begin her text with those of her widowed state. This suggests that the authorial tears which open a number of Christine's allegorical and epistolary texts are in fact fundamentally the grieving tears of a widow. But the question remains: how does Christine's widowhood become a Marian trope? I wish to argue, based on her devotion to the Virgin as mediatrix, that Christine's tears are the tears of the *mater dolorosa*, the widowed Virgin of the Passion. From this I want to suggest that despite her use of a range of complaint and lamentation genres in her epistles, all three texts are linked by their politicized deployment of the sorrowing voice of the *planctus Mariae*.

The theological tradition of the *mater dolorosa*, or sorrowing Virgin mother, which entered Western Christendom from the East, had become a commonplace of Marian devotion by the time Christine began writing. Focusing on the Virgin's tearful grief at the Crucifixion, this tradition interpreted her behaviour as the fulfilment of Simeon's prophesy in Luke 2. 35 that a sword of sorrow will pass through Mary's maternal heart. And while this Marian figure mostly functioned to inspire a tradition of affective devotion, its significance for Christine lies in the particular possibilities it offers for the authorizing of her widow's voice. As both widow and mother, the *mater dolorosa* offers Christine, a fellow widow and mother 'de .iii. enfans petiz', a form of Marian identification which authorizes her voice as a woman writer.

The authorization to speak provided by the *mater dolorosa* is also explored by Karma Lochrie with regard to how Margery Kempe's identification with the Virgin's 'sorwe' operates to legitimate her own 'lowde voys'. A vast array of verbal and visual medieval representations of the *mater dolorosa* at the foot of the Cross portray her as weeping, wailing and rending her breast. The significance of this weeping for

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<sup>53</sup> "'The Cry of the Chameleon": Evolving Voices in the Epistles of Christine de Pizan', in *Disputatio: an international transdisciplinary journal of the late Middle Ages*, 1 [ed. by Carol Poster and Richard Utz; Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press] (1996), 37–70 (p. 53).

<sup>54</sup> See Richards, 'French Cultural Nationalism and Christian Universalism in the Works of Christine de Pizan', in *Politics, Gender and Genre*, pp. 75–94; Mary McKinley, 'The Subversive "Seulette"', in *Politics, Gender and Genre*, pp. 157–69; and Linda Leppig, 'The Political Rhetoric of Christine de Pizan: *Lamentacion sur les maux de la guerre civile*', in *Politics, Gender and Genre*, pp. 141–56.

Christine, and other women looking to authorize their voices, was that it focused on a moment in the Virgin's life that marked a departure from her much-lauded silence throughout the Gospels. By imitating the excessive grief of the Virgin as the privileged 'reader of the Christic body' at the Crucifixion, Kempe as a wife and mother is able to legitimate the mystical text of her own roaring and 'boistows sobbyng'.<sup>55</sup>

Similarly, an examination of Christine's early *Oroyson* poems reveals frequent allusions to the Virgin's tears. Addressing Mary in the final stanza of *L'Oroyson Nostre Dame*, for instance, Christine evokes 'les fontaines / De tes chastes yeulz et les peines / Qu'a ton filz veïs en la croix' [the fountains of your chaste eyes as you beheld the agony of your son on the cross].<sup>56</sup> While less frequent in its references to Mary's tears, *Une Oroyson de Nostre Seigneur* nevertheless petitions for Christ's forgiveness 'par [...] la pitié que ta Mere ot de toy' [by the pity that your Mother had for you] (line 146, p.22) and makes reference to the tears of the 'dames / Et filles [...] de Jherusalem' [ladies and girls of Jerusalem] present at the Crucifixion (lines 119–20, p.21). The redemptive authority that Christine attributes to the Virgin's tears is clear in her request for similar tears in the lines 'O mon Seigneur, envoie moy / Fontaine de plour' [O my Lord, send me a fountain of tears] (lines 125–26, p.21).<sup>57</sup>

Acknowledging Christine's preoccupation—and, indeed, identification—with the sorrowing virgin mother is, I believe, vital to understanding the way she defined tears as a form of political action. While, as I have mentioned, others have commented on her tearfulness, and have correctly linked it to such biblical precedents as Jeremiah's Lamentations and Jonah, none have definitively linked it to the *mater dolorosa* tradition. Furthermore, while there is extensive commentary devoted to Christine's use of Annunciation iconography, comparatively little has been said about her equally significant appeals to this other Marian figure. Within her immediate social context, Christine's appeal to the authority of the *mater dolorosa* also helps to ensure that her authorial *topos* as widow was not open to the suspicion customarily reserved for widows. In her discussion of medieval

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<sup>55</sup> See the fascinating chapter, 'Embodying the Text: Boisterous Tears and Privileged Readings' in Karma Lochrie, *Margery Kempe and Translations of the Flesh* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991). Other accounts of the *mater dolorosa* can be found in Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London: Picador, 1976, 1990), pp. 206–223, and Hilda Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1963), pp. 306–08, who points to the elaboration of the *planctus Mariae* tradition in fourteenth-century Marian devotion.

<sup>56</sup> Lines 205–07, p.9, from *L'Oroyson Nostre Dame*, in *Oeuvres poétiques de Christine de Pisan*, III, pp. 1–9. This poem also contains fewer direct references to Mary's tears, such as in the terms of address 'Fontaine de Misericorde' (line 162, p. 7), and 'Fontaine, pleine de pitié' (line 133, p. 6).

<sup>57</sup> All references are to *Une Oroyson de Nostre Seigneur*, in *Oeuvres poétiques de Christine de Pisan*, III, pp. 15–26.



widowhood, Louise Mirrer points to the moral ambiguity of this state as it is represented in the literature and law of medieval culture. While the widow, free from the carnal bonds of marriage, could devote herself to God, thereby 'almost approach(ing) virgins in holy status', widowhood was also seen as 'a state that freed women to act on the wanton, whorish and unprincipled tendencies ascribed to women in general by medieval misogynist writers. Widows would be sexually voracious once deprived of their husband's company in bed'.<sup>58</sup>

The motif of the unchaste, easily consoled widow was a popular one in the literature of medieval France. Heather Arden's analysis of widows in late medieval French literature includes a discussion of the widespread popularity of Petronius's tale of the Widow of Ephesus, who is wooed by a new lover in the presence of her husband's still-warm corpse.<sup>59</sup> Elements of this tale are found, according to Arden, in texts as divergent as Chrétien de Troyes's *Yvain* and the fabliau 'La Veuve'. Significantly, one famous version of the tale was found in the *Lamentations* of Matheolus, the text that Christine reads at the beginning of the *Cité des dames*. Moreover, another important text for Christine, John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*, which contained a detailed version of Petronius's fable, had been translated into French in the late fourteenth century by Denis Foulechat.<sup>60</sup> This widow, then, was installed as a popular figure in late medieval French culture—a figure whose influence Christine had to rebut in valorising her widowhood and, therefore, her authorship and the political agency emerging from it.

In asserting her widowed status, then, Christine could potentially have made herself vulnerable to suspicions regarding her virtue. (in *Advision* III, 6, pp. 103-4) she alludes to rumours circulating that she herself had a lover). As virtue and in particular sexual chastity were essential to women's participation in the textual

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<sup>58</sup> Louise Mirrer, 'Introduction' in *Upon My Husband's Death: Widows in the Literature and Histories of Medieval Europe*, ed. by Louise Mirrer (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press), p. 1. The same ambiguous state of sexual virtue is apparent in the description of holy widows as 'essentially virgins manqué' by Cindy L. Carlson and Angela Jane Weisl, in the volume they jointly edit, *Constructions of Widowhood and Virginity in the Middle Ages* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999), p. 3.

<sup>59</sup> Heather Arden, 'Grief, Widowhood and Women's Sexuality in Medieval French Literature', in *Upon My Husband's Death*, pp. 305–20.

<sup>60</sup> 'A Mirror for Misogynists: John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* (8.11) in the Translation of Denis Foulechat (1372)', ed. and trans. by Eric Hicks, in *Reinterpreting Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Richards and others, pp. 77–107 (98–99). Hicks discusses the strong possibility that Christine would have been familiar with this tale, given the influence of the *Policraticus* on her *Livre de corps de policie*, which she probably read in Foulechat's translation at the king's library. For other examples of the misogynist figure of the sexually suspect widow, and in particular Criseida in Boccaccio's *Filostrato*, see Rebecca Hayward, 'Between the Living and the Dead; Widows as Heroines of Medieval Romances', in *Constructions of Widowhood and Virginity*, ed. by Carlson and Weisl, pp. 221–43.

activities of reading and writing, it was necessary for Christine's bid for authority that she establish herself as a virtuous widow.

In light of this, the ongoing nature of Christine's *topos* of tearfulness can be interpreted as a symbol of her widowed chastity, which in turn ensures her capacity to write. Christine continues to weep over the years, unlike the Widow of Ephesus, and unlike the Wife of Bath who, dry-eyed, tells in her Prologue of her lustful observation of Jankyn's 'paire/ Of legges so clene and faire' even as he follows 'after the beere' at her fourth husband's funeral.<sup>61</sup>

This *topos* functions to authorize her texts as issuing from a chaste, faithful widow and a contemporary *mater dolorosa*, weeping her redemptive tears for women, and in so doing, instituting a new textual covenant. Just as Mary's conception of Jesus is described in the *Cité des dames* (l. 9, p. 80; p. 24) as redeeming humanity from 'Eve's misdeed', so will Christine's texts redeem women from their condemnation at the hands of textual tradition and offer them political agency.

This authorization is vital to Christine's aim of public intervention in her political epistles, and to her formulation of herself as interceding on behalf of the French people. But how can casting herself as the *mater dolorosa* achieve this? Surely this Marian figure, unlike the *Regina coeli*, is best known for her compassion, her capacity for empathetic suffering, rather than her intercessory power? While the vocal Virgin at the Crucifixion might authorize speech, the *planctus Mariae* she offers her dead son, is, as Sandro Sticca has convincingly argued, ironically most powerful for its articulation of human impotence.<sup>62</sup> Christine, however, offsets this potential limitation, and effectively politicizes the *planctus Mariae*, by establishing tears, especially tears of human compassion, as a form of intervention.

In their discussion of the fourteenth-century French *L'Advocacie de Nostre Dame*, Spurgeon Baldwin and James W. Marchand state that the image of the Virgin as advocate gained popularity in the later Middle Ages because its use in the pseudo-Bernardine sermon 'Advocata nostra' linked it with the authoritative name of St Bernard.<sup>63</sup> Looking at the 1402/3 text *L'Oroyson Nostre Dame*, which contains no fewer than six references to Bernard, and which refers to the virgin as 'nostre moyen et nostre sente' [our means and our way] (line 15), it appears Christine may have had some knowledge of this sermon. This poem is, furthermore, replete with references to the *mater dolorosa*'s tears: she is a 'Fontaine de Misericorde' (line 162, p. 7), and a 'Fontaine, pleine de pitié' (line 133, p. 6). Most significantly, Christine appeals in

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<sup>61</sup> 'The Canturbury Tales', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), p. 113, lines 596–99.

<sup>62</sup> Sandro Sticca, *The Planctus Mariae in the Dramatic Tradition of the Middle Ages*; trans. by Joseph R. Berrigan (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1988).

<sup>63</sup> Spurgeon Baldwin and James W. Marchand, 'The Virgin Mary as Advocate before the Heavenly Court', *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 18 (1992), 79–93 (p. 93, n. 2).

Stanza 18 for intercession 'par les fontaines / De tes yeulz' [by the fountains of your chaste eyes] (lines 205–06, p. 9), a plea that explicitly links Mary's tearfulness with her influence as heavenly mediatrix. This, along with a brief plea for Marian intercession in *Les XV Joyes Nostre Dame*,<sup>64</sup> also from 1402/3, suggests that Christine was conscious of the potency of the *mater dolorosa* some time before she came to politicize her mediatory agency.

The notion of tears as intercessionary is also explicit in the section of the *Cité* 1. 10, p. 84 (p. 28), where Christine undertakes an antiphrastic interpretation of the proverb 'Plourer, parler, filler mist Dieu en femme' [God made women to speak, weep, and sew]. Here Reason argues that it is through the 'tears of devotion' of holy women such as St Monica, Mary Magdalen, and the biblical 'femme vesve' [widow] that many 'are saved'. Considering that Christine displays here a full awareness of the salvatory significance of the Virgin's and other women's tears, it becomes clear that her tears at the opening of her texts in fact bestow upon them a redemptive power issuing from the widowed, sorrowing state of its author. Secondly, in the context of late medieval political literature, dominated by the mirror for princes genre, which, according to Judith Ferster, tended to embed critique within advice,<sup>65</sup> the *planctus* form might be construed as a relatively 'gloves off' mode of intervention.<sup>66</sup> Thus by evoking and emulating the *mater dolorosa* tradition Christine enacts a self-authorization whereby she may, as widow and writer, lay claim to a unique form of compassionate intercession expressed in the *mater*'s vocal, sorrowful widowhood.

This kind of intercessionary authority would have been appropriate for a woman of Christine's social standing to claim. It is true, as Huneycutt argues, that the paradigm of Marian intercessionary authority reached beyond queenship, such that 'some noble women actively encouraged intercessionary imagery as a new definition of their political authority'.<sup>67</sup> However, when writing to the queen and other members of the royal family, presenting her intercession as that of the *Regina Coeli* would not have been either prudent or appropriate for Christine, especially when she is appealing to her addressees' higher intercessionary powers. In articulating her own intercessionary authority in *Epistre a la royne*, Christine thus again deploys the trope

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<sup>64</sup> *Les XV Joyes Nostre Dame*, in *Oeuvres poétiques de Christine de Pisan*, III, pp. 11–14; line 5, p. 11.

<sup>65</sup> Ferster, *Fictions of Advice*, pp. 3, 67–85.

<sup>66</sup> Leppig also notes that Christine's use of the genre of *complainte* allows her to exploit its ambiguity, as it is both a lyric and legal genre. See 'The Political Rhetoric of Christine de Pizan', pp. 143–49.

<sup>67</sup> Huneycutt, 'Intercession and the High Medieval Queen', p. 131. See also Rosemary Muir Wright, 'The Virgin in the Sun and in the Tree', in *Women and Sovereignty*, pp. 36–59, McCartney, 'Ceremonies and Privileges of Office', p. 84, and Parsons, 'The Queen's Intercession in Thirteenth-Century England', pp. 153–59.

of tearfulness, begging Isabeau not to despise 'la voix plourable de moy' [this tearful voice of mine] (pp. 70–71), thereby representing herself as a tearful supplicant calling upon the higher intermediary prerogative of the queen. Christine's intercession is thus secondary, inciting the queen to act. In so doing, Christine creates the *Epistre à la royne* not merely as a political epistle, but as a *political prayer* to the queen, a secular *Salve Regina*. One can surmise from Christine's exasperated 'dors-tu adés?' [are you still sleeping?] (pp. 88–89) five years later in the *Lamentacion sur les maux de la guerre civile* that Isabeau did not see fit to grant Christine's prayer.<sup>68</sup> In the *Lamentacion*, Christine again resorts to the *topos* of supplication. Addressing the Duc de Berry, to whom she attributes the patriotic role of 'pere d'antiquite de la fleur de liz toute' [father of all the antiquity of the lily] (pp. 90–91), she implores him to restore peace between the warring Burgundians and Armagnacs. However, in this text, Christine's tears are not those of the *Salve Regina* supplicant. Here Christine presents herself in the *Lamentacion* as a political *mater dolorosa*, whose tearful *planctus* ratifies her intercessionary agency on behalf of the people of France.

The motif of tearfulness is also threaded through *Prison de vie humaine* and *Lamentacion sur les maux de la guerre civile*. Both of these texts were written in direct response to political events, the *Lamentacion* to its eponymous civil war, and *L'Epistre* to the French defeat at Agincourt. Drawing upon the biblical lamentation tradition, the *Lamentacion* falls within Poirion's genre of the *plainte politique*,<sup>69</sup> while *Prison de vie humaine* is written as a *consolatio* to the wives and widows of the vanquished. Despite their different genres these texts are alike in their representation of tears as political action. Furthermore in both texts the *topos* of tearfulness represents the embattled nation of France not simply as a feminized state, but as one which Christine, as widow, figures in her own image.

Comparing this text to the opening of the *Cité des dames*, it is significant that when discussing her tears in the *Lamentacion*, Christine describes them as 'me moille piz et giron' [wetting my breast and lap] (pp. 88–89), thus repeating the *Cité's* emphasis on the 'giron' as the generative and authorizing *locus* of her feminine body. However, while these tears, like the divine light of the *Cité*, fall onto her lap, their excess here threatens to interrupt Christine's textual production. For, flowing 'comme ruisseaux sur mon papier' [like streams on my paper] (pp. 88–89), and washing away her words, Christine's authorizing tears also cause her to lay aside her pen to wipe her failing eyes.

Christine's excess of tears and her 'giron' mark her as national *mater dolorosa* in lieu of Isabeau, who has failed in her duty as political mediatrix, although she is still referred to as 'mother of the noble heirs of France' (p. 89). Mary McKinley observes

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<sup>68</sup> Quilligan, *The Allegory of Female Authority*, p. 250, citing Mathilde Laigle, suggests that having written the epistle, Christine 'precipitously lost the queen's favor'.

<sup>69</sup> Poirion, *Le Poète et le Prince*, p. 415.

that the closed eyes of Isabeau depicted in the outburst 'dors-tu adés?' contrast strikingly with Christine's own bleary, weeping eyes.<sup>70</sup> Returning to the *exemplum* of the Sabine women, whose successful tearful intervention had been noted in the *Cité de dames* (II. 33, p. 308; p. 149), Christine calls for collective action, inciting the women of France to join her in her role as political mediatrix, exhorting them '(p)lourez donques, plourez, batant les paulmes a grans cris' [cry, cry, beat your hands and cry] (pp. 86–87). These tears are represented not only as an appropriate response to the grief of civil war, but also, as Leppig has noted, as an expression of political and moral protest.<sup>71</sup> By way of this action the body politic is figured, like Christine in her authorial self-representation, as a weeping widow. The reference to the widowed Jerusalem of Lamentations is, of course, undeniable; nevertheless, I want to suggest, however, that Christine's audience, acquainted as they were with her circumstances, would have detected her presence in the image she creates of her beloved France. Her own well-documented widowhood brings a dramatic immediacy and authenticity to this depiction of the beleaguered state.

Considering the collective nature of the political agency in the *Lamentacion*, it is interesting that in its opening words Christine describes herself as 'seulette a part', an opening solitude *topos* reaffirmed, according to McKinley, by Christine's final words, which mark her 'withdraw[al] from the community she evokes',<sup>72</sup> and ultimately cast the *Lamentacion* as the hopeless cry of a solitary *vox clamantis*, a 'povre voix criant en ce royaume' [a poor voice crying in this kingdom] (pp. 94–95). Nevertheless, while Christine's description of herself as 'seulette' might seem to segregate her, readers of Christine's *balades* would, as Leppig points out,<sup>73</sup> have recognized it both as a biblically-inflected reprise of the 'seulette' persona of her early *poèmes de veuvage*, in particular of her famous Balade 11, and as an articulation of her widowed status—a status that guarantees her a place in the political milieu she describes. Thus she is finally, in McKinley's words, 'both apart and a part'. An analysis of these poems reveals that from the earliest stages of her writing career Christine's articulation of her personal aloneness was tempered by her sense of widows as a disenfranchised group within the masculine body politic of France, in which an ethic of care is absent, as demonstrated in verse 6 of her *Autres balades*; 'Helas! Où dont trouveront reconfort / Povres vesves, de leurs biens despoullées?—Puis qu'en France, qui seult ester le port / De leur salu ... n'y ont plus amistie' [Alas! Where can poor widows, robbed of their goods, find consolation,

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<sup>70</sup> McKinley, 'The Subversive "Seulette"', p. 163.

<sup>71</sup> Leppig says 'this joint weeping and mourning can also be interpreted as an act of defiance and a display of unity against and in the midst of the warring factions': 'The Political Rhetoric of Christine de Pizan', p. 144.

<sup>72</sup> McKinley 'The Subversive "Seulette"', p. 167.

<sup>73</sup> Leppig, 'The Political Rhetoric of Christine de Pizan', p. 143.

since in France, once the port of safety for them [...] there is no longer any friendship?'] (lines 1–6, pp. 213–14).

In *Prison de vie humaine*, Christine further develops an image of the state identified with her own image as a woman writer. This long prose epistle, which also opens with a tearfulness motif, was completed in 1418 and addressed as a *consolatio* to Marie of Berry and other Frenchwomen who had lost their menfolk in the Battle of Agincourt. Christine's desire to console Marie, whose husband was languishing in English captivity, is not surprising, given Christine's condemnation in *Corps de policie* of the 'cruel and inhumane' treatment of prisoners of war.<sup>74</sup> In this text, the *Lamentacion*'s affirmative representation of tears as political action has vanished. Here it becomes apparent that in Christine's work we encounter a taxonomy of tears, divided into those that either make action possible or are themselves a form of action, and those that are an expression of impotence. The latter put us in mind of Christine's counsel against excessive mourning in the *Trois vertus*, where widows are warned not to wallow too long in their grief. In a stark contrast to the earlier text, Christine now seeks to restrain the debilitating 'flus de lermes' [flood of tears] (pp. 2–3) issuing from the grieving women of France by way of a litany of *exempla* and authoritative *sententiae*. Offering advice drawn from classical and biblical sources, *Prison* offers a stoic Christian consolation in which all life is represented as tribulation, and imprisonment.<sup>75</sup>

The depiction of the French state in this epistle constitutes an intensified version of that offered in the *Lamentacion*. To begin with, her apology to the Duchess of Bourbon, in which she explains that sorrow has delayed the writing of the epistle, locates her within the community of women afflicted by the losses after Agincourt. However, as with the ambivalent stance of 'seulette' adopted in the *Lamentacion*, Christine's dual status here as writer and widow again locates her both outside and inside the community she describes. As a young widow Christine had alleviated her sufferings, according to *Advision*, through study and writing. Now, as a long-term widow and writer, she has sufficient distance to be able, at least eventually, to finish her epistle. In spite of this distance, however, it is precisely on the basis of her 'petit estat vesval' [humble widowed estate] (pp. 2–3) that Christine inscribes herself within the national community of widows of *Prison de vie humaine*, by returning the advice she claims the duchess once offered her.

Her identification of the misfortune of France with her own widowhood here again creates the French polity in the feminized image of a weeping widow. This is not a new analogy in Christine's work, having appeared as early as *Advision*, where the figure of France, La Dame Couronnee, describes herself as a disconsolate widow (35). Unlike the polity of *Advision*, though, this image of the widowed polity is not

<sup>74</sup> *Corps de policie* I. 15, p. 27 (trans. by Forhan, p. 29).

<sup>75</sup> See for instance *Prison Epistre* (pp. 10–21), where these sources, among others, are frequently mentioned.

simply metaphorical, but reflects the reality of France stripped of its noblemen and soldiers. In addition, perhaps out of a recognition of the depth of this national calamity, Christine does not represent the widowed polity here as a healing mediatrix. Instead she represents France, like herself in *Advison* I. 19 (p. 36) as the widowed victim of 'la vie humaine', whose healing, like her own, lies in reading the comforting words of the *auctores*.

Two years later, possibly having retired to the Abbey of Poissy, Christine returns for the last time to the *mater dolorosa*, offering her fullest and lengthiest account of this figure in her prose meditation *Heures de contemplacion sur la passion de Nostre Seigneur*, a text which, its title notwithstanding, can justifiably be described as an *imitatio Mariae*.<sup>76</sup> Despite its early appeal to the stoic exemplum offered by the 'peinnes et doleurs que souffrit [...] tant paciemment le roy du ciel' (lines 25–26),<sup>77</sup> one can trace a gradual but unmistakable shift in focus from Christ's Passion to the Virgin's compassion, so that the text's final stages are almost exclusively devoted to meditating on her role in the Passion and thus in salvation history.<sup>78</sup> While this meditation predictably dwells on Mary's loss of her son, Christine is explicit in figuring this loss as a second widowhood, describing the Virgin's departure from her son's tomb wearing 'ung grant mantel noir' [a long black robe] which covers her face 'comme a dame nouvellement vesve' [like a woman recently widowed] (lines 1332–34). In so doing, Christine treats Mary's widowhood as significant to this, her final commission in the covenant of redemption.

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<sup>76</sup> This linking of the *vita Christi* and *vita Mariae* had begun as early as St Bernard's emphasis on the life of the Virgin in his promotion of the devotion of the rosary, and had continued in the many visual representations of the Virgin's life in books of hours. Gail McMurray Gibson emphasizes the prominence of the virgin's role in the influential Pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditationes vitae Christi*, claiming 'it might be argued that the primary devotional model offered by the *Meditationes vitae Christi* is *imitatio Mariae* instead of *imitatio Christi*'. See *The Theater of Devotion: East Anglian Drama and Society in the Late Middle Ages* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 49–50. It is worth noting that Christine's associate Jean Gerson also devotes attention to the Virgin in his famous Passion sermon 'Ad deum vadit', in an attempt to redress the Evangelists' neglect of her in their accounts of the Passion. For a discussion of this, see Donna Spivey Ellington, *From Sacred Body to Angelic Soul: Understanding Mary in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America, 2001), pp. 77–79.

<sup>77</sup> Taken from Liliane Dulac's forthcoming edition of *Heures de contemplacion sur la Passion de Nostre Seigneur*, to be published by Champion. All future line references are to this edition. My sincere thanks to Jeff Richards and to Mme Dulac for securing me a copy of the working manuscript of this edition.

<sup>78</sup> Liliane Dulac also comments on this shift, which she regards as remarkable, in 'Littérature et Dévotion: À propos des *Heures de contemplacion sur la Passion de Nostre Seigneur* de Christine de Pizan', in *Miscellanea Mediaevalia: Mélanges offerts à Philippe Ménard*, ed. by J. Claude Faucon, Alain Labbé, and Danielle Quérueil (Paris: Champion, 1998), pp. 475–84 (p. 483).

Like the *Prison de vie humaine*, this text is offered as a form of *consolatio*. It differs from the earlier text, however, in the intended scope of this consolation; for while in the *Prison* Christine addresses a single woman, in the *Heures* she broadens her ambit, directing her lesson of Marian stoicism 'des dames et demoiselles, et generalmente de toutes femmes adoulees a cause des tribulacions passees et presentes' [to all women and maidens [...] stricken by tribulations past and present] (lines 2–3).<sup>79</sup> In this text we again encounter a portrayal of post-Agincourt France as a community of grieving women buffeted by hardship and loss. Furthermore, by declaring her 'pitié et compassion' for these women, Christine again positions herself as 'seulette a part', her pity marking her distance from them while her compassion indicates active involvement in their suffering.

Discussing the *Heures* in the context of Christine's political works might at first seem unwarranted, given this is for the most part a meditative rather than a political text. Indeed, Dulac claims that despite some opening 'brèves allusions' to the misfortunes of France, 's'il est un trait qui distingue radicalement les *Heures* des oeuvres antérieures, c'est bien l'absence de toute référence biographique ou politique'.<sup>80</sup> It is certainly true that apart from her opening expression of 'pitié et compassion' for afflicted women, Christine refrains in this text from the lachrymose self-portrait common to the political epistles. It is also true that her allusions to 'les malheurs du royaume' are, as Dulac argues, brief and rather general, limited to lamenting 'tant de mort d'amis par plusieurs accidens, comme de toutes autres pertes: exil, dechacemens et maintes autres durtés et horribles perilz' [so many deaths of friends by several accidents, like all the other losses" exile, expulsion and many other hard and frightful dangers] (lines 12–15). I want to suggest, however, that despite their necessarily general nature—Christine is, after all, addressing 'generalment toutes du feminine sexe' [generally, everyone of the feminine sex] (lines 7–8)—these remarks are far from perfunctory. Rather, they paint in broad and vivid strokes a scene of national catastrophe that contextualizes the meditation on the Passion that is to follow. In this sense the *Heures de contemplacion*, like a number of Christine's early verses, can be regarded as a companion text to her political epistles.

This text also corresponds to the political epistles in its depiction of tears as a response to public calamity. However, Christine's representation of tears in the *Heures* is distinguished by its ambivalence. At the outset, it appears to reinforce the *Prison de vie humaine*'s contention that tears pose an obstacle to writing. This is apparent in Christine's atypical adoption of a dry-eyed persona, who suppresses all references to her own grief and emphasizes instead her long-standing role as a writer who supports and defends women. That this is a purposeful suppression of her tears

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<sup>79</sup> The translation is from Enid McLeod, *The Order of the Rose: The Life and Ideas of Christine de Pizan* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1976), p. 159, who translates an extract from an article by Suzanne Solente.

<sup>80</sup> Dulac, 'Littérature et Dévotion', p. 476.



is suggested by the fact that, as mentioned before, in the *Ditié*, written some nine years after the *Heures*, Christine describes herself having wept for the last eleven years. Thus in the *Heures* the tears that threatened to erase her words in the *Prison de vie humaine* are stemmed so that they will not jeopardize her offer of consolation. This association of tears with impotence or inaction is further reinforced throughout the text by its depiction of Mary's tears and familiar *planctus* as expressions of her powerlessness. Christine's vivid dramatization of the Passion repeatedly portrays the Virgin in a state of tearful impotence: she cries out in compassionate pain at her son's inescapable suffering, laments her own ordained fate: 'Symeon [...] me dist que tu seroies le gleve qui trespencerait m'ame' [Symeon told me you would be the sword that would pierce my soul] (lines 582–83), and weeps as she is helplessly driven back by the throngs along the *via dolorosa*,<sup>82</sup> These scenes culminate in the quintessential depictions of her as the suffering *mater dolorosa*, 'au pié de la croix, couverte de lermes, ou son doulz filz pendoit' [at the foot of the cross where her sweet son hangs, covered in tears] (lines 1108–09), and later bathing with her tears the blood and dirt from her dead son's face (lines 1251–54).

And yet at the same time the *Heures* retains a notion of tears as an effective weapon against despair. This is applied especially to the *mater dolorosa*'s exemplary tears, as they are accompanied by a 'pure et devote compassion' through which, if imitated, 'lez cuers ne soient mie endurciz, maiz tellement amoliez' [hearts will not be hardened, but softened] (lines 100–102). This softness of heart, far from signalling an absence of resolve, marks an acquiescence to God's will that is ultimately also an affirmation of hope in salvation. Thus even in the depths of her anguish, bent over the body of her dead son, the Virgin is still able to commend him tearfully to his heavenly Father, thereby affirming the painful process necessary to human redemption. Lest this emphasis on hope in heavenly salvation seem like an injunction to resignation and political inaction, it is important to bear in mind that Christine explicitly proffers her meditation on the Virgin's hopeful tears as a response to the recent losses suffered by the women of France: 'Hee! Me dames du monde, qui passes en ce siecle par le chemin de tribulacion en maintes adversitéz, mirés vous en la pacience de ceste tres glorieuse dame, et vous aurés cause de pourter voz douleurs paciemment' [Oh! ladies of the world who in this age walk along the path of tribulation and many adversities, marvel at the patiences of this glorious lady and you will have reason to bear your sufferings patiently] (lines 823–25). While it must be admitted that the *mater dolorosa* does not here offer women an exemplum of conspicuous political intervention, she nevertheless embodies a commitment to justice and a refusal of despair that is exemplary to those women whose lives have been devastated by the misfortunes of France. Change will, the text

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<sup>81</sup> *Le Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*, ed. and trans. by Angus J. Kennedy and Kenneth Varty, *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 18 (1974), 29–55, and 19 (1975), 53–76 (pp. 39, 66).

<sup>82</sup> In lines 753–54, Christine describes 'la grant presse qui [se] boutoit arriere'.

suggests, be brought about through tears of hopeful patience, tears that promise not only the salvation of the soul and the alleviation of personal suffering, but also, importantly, the deliverance of France. This belief in the coalescence of divine salvation and national recovery, and in the efficacy of hopeful tears in bringing it about, reaches its finale in the *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*, as Christine presents France's victory over the English as an instance of divine favour, saying 'Dieu a tout ce fait de sa grace' [God [...] accomplished all this through His grace].<sup>83</sup>

Willard, rebutting claims that the *Heures* was written in response to a national misfortune such as the 1420 Treaty of Troyes, suggests it may have been responding to the death of Christine's son, Jean.<sup>84</sup> Indeed, Christine's allusions to political turmoil do arguably seem vague and anaemic when compared to the heartrending portrayals of the widowed Virgin mourning her son, and the explicit references to the sorrows 'souffertes de meres pour mort ou tourmens de leurs enfans' [suffered by mothers for the death and torment of their children] (line 827). It is, however, perhaps unnecessary to choose between these options, for it is apparent from her writings that Christine clearly regards France's fate and her own as intertwined. This is true to the end of her life, when she celebrates France's triumph in the *Ditié*, a celebratory poem in which her tears finally achieve their end—both in the sense of their cessation and their objective. It is in this, her final text, that we finally see the image of France as a doleful widow replaced by that of a victorious and blessed virgin.

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<sup>83</sup> *Ditié*, VII, line 50, p. 29; translation paragraph VII, p. 41.

<sup>84</sup> Willard, *Christine de Pizan: Her Life and Work*, p. 203.

# Christine de Pizan and the Body Politic

TSAE LAN LEE DOW

Christine de Pizan was an ethically oriented political writer. The aim of this essay is to examine how Christine presents women as moral agents and political actors through the metaphor of the body politic. The central contention that underpins this study is that Christine considered women of all social stations as ethical and political subjects, and through examples exhorted women to fulfil their socio-political potential and responsibilities. I suggest that Christine presents us with two images of the body politic. The first is a more traditional ‘masculine’ body politic, and the second is a ‘feminine’ body politic. In the former construction Christine emphasizes the responsibilities of men towards women. In creating the second, ‘feminine’, body politic, Christine opens up the possibility of seeing women as useful and active members of the community. In constructing women as capable of choice and agency Christine casts women as potentially important political actors, and in so doing she reworks the dominant ideas of the political realm as requiring the input of men and women on an equal footing. Christine’s politics is inclusive and communally oriented. I suggest that through the analogy of a ‘happy marriage’ Christine’s writings conjoin these two politics—the masculine and the feminine—to argue for a peaceful, united, and harmonious France.

## *The Body Politic*

As background to this essay it is necessary to make a few brief comments about the metaphor of the body politic. The body politic emerges as a socio-culturally rich and politically potent metaphor during the later Middle Ages, in a culture used to representations of the divine, the universal, and the abstract in a single particular figure: the figure of Christ. This figure is perhaps the background to the emergence of the body politic as a coherent and compelling image representing the human

community. The body politic was refashioned by writers and artists to suit a number of political ends. In those historical instances where the metaphor is most influential and rich in meanings it has three crucial aspects. First, there is an ideal aspect. This is the abstract ideal of polity (for example, as it may reflect divine order), which implies a critique of the existing form of political order. Second, there is the 'practical' aspect of the body politic, which gives some guidelines for the behaviour of political actors (as we are familiar with in the 'mirror for princes' genre), and the structure of an actual polity. Third, the body politic as metaphor is condensed into a particular figure. Most often, in the period in question, the emblem, or more precisely the *prosopopoeia*, of the body politic was a prince or a king.

Of course, we cannot know that it was Christine's conscious intention to ordain a 'feminine' body politic. I do suggest, however, that her political theory argues consistently and skilfully in advocacy of women as political actors as part of a unified and peaceful French nation. Further, examining Christine's works through the analytic lens of the body politic helps us to appreciate this consistency and skill, even when she is writing for particular audiences and narrower purposes. Rather than viewing the *City of Ladies* as a literary masterpiece but political pipedream, and the *Book of the Three Virtues* [also known as the *Treasury of the City of Ladies*] as a depressing compromise with late medieval social reality, we can see these texts as part and parcel of a single grand political project. As well, Christine's celebration of the startling new possibilities heralded by Joan of Arc's achievements takes on a distinctly political cast, consistent with her other writings. The ideal, universal, and abstract, are as much necessary to her political vision as the practical, particular, and concrete.

As will be discussed below, Christine took the metaphor of the body politic from John of Salisbury. Both of Christine's treatments of the metaphor draw on, and also subtly change, much of John's use of it. Like John, Christine argues as a fundamental theme the need for a real nexus binding moral convictions and socio-political practice. Unlike John, Christine sees a crucial role for women in the maintenance of political peace and social harmony, and this would demand a radical reappraisal of dominant medieval attitudes to women and the feminine. So Christine not only deploys a 'masculine' and a 'feminine' body politic, but also insists that the two gendered metaphors be united on a basis of mutual respect and understanding, in line with her arguments in favour of 'happy marriage'. Earl Jeffrey Richards explains that her 'defense of Christian marriage was a call for the highest form of moral commitment between a man and a woman and not an endorsement of institutionalized domination'.<sup>1</sup> According to Richards 'Christine saw in Christianity a means of overcoming oppression'.<sup>2</sup> As well, it is noteworthy

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<sup>1</sup> Earl Jeffrey Richards, in the introduction to his translation of Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, rev. edn (New York: Persea Books, 1998), p. xxxiii.

<sup>2</sup> Richards, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, p. xxxiii.

that she shifts the terms of marriage from symbolic spiritual union to socio-political equality, and in so doing she challenges the idealization of female embodiment as virgin purity by extending the range of positive roles and corporeal attributes to be included in the idealised concept of woman. This move elevates the feminine body politic to equal status with the masculine body politic.

### *John of Salisbury's Policraticus*

As mentioned, Christine's use of the metaphor of the body politic originates with John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*. While it is beyond the scope of this essay to examine John's image of the body politic in detail, it is worth noting something concerning John's construction, as his work constitutes an important precedent for Christine's use of the notion, foreshadowing its gendered and political extensions. In examining the body politic in the works of John of Salisbury and Christine de Pizan, Kate Langdon Forhan notes that we must remember to set aside anachronistic medical and cultural conceptions involving the movement of blood, the functions of the heart, brain and organs, and the like.<sup>3</sup> John deploys the metaphor as a philosophical, abstract ideal that critiques 'the frivolities of courtiers', and gives a blueprint for a masculine, virile polity. He distinguishes a fundamentally flawed polity, headed by a tyrant (whom one can flatter, lie to, and therefore in the end do away with)<sup>4</sup> ruling an effeminate court, from an ideal political body headed by a true prince (the legitimate and noble ruler of the republic), and which is founded on potent knighthood and an ethic of religious chivalry.

John attributes the metaphor of the body politic to the so-called *Instruction of Trajan*, supposedly authored by Plutarch. However, scholarly consensus is that no such work ever existed, and that it 'was actually a convenient fiction fashioned by John as a cloak for that intellectual novelty so despised by the medieval cast of mind'.<sup>5</sup> John's strategic creation of the *Instruction of Trajan* raises a number of issues. For John, 'that which institutes and moulds the practice of religion in us and which transmits the worship of God'<sup>6</sup> takes on the role of the soul in relation

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<sup>3</sup> Kate Langdon Forhan, 'Polycracy, Obligation and Revolt: The Body Politic in John of Salisbury and Christine de Pizan', in *Politics, Gender and Genre: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Margaret Brabant (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992) p. 42.

<sup>4</sup> This interpretation is sometimes debated, but Cary J. Nederman is convincing on this issue. See, 'A Duty to Kill', *Review of Politics*, 50 (1988), 365–89.

<sup>5</sup> Cary J. Nederman, in the introduction to his translation of John of Salisbury, *Policraticus: Of the Frivolities of Courtiers and the Footprints of Philosophers* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. xxi.

<sup>6</sup> John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, v. 2, ed. C. C. J. Webb, 2 vols (London, 1909), II, p. 282 (trans. by Nederman, p. 66).

to the body. According to John, 'those who direct the practice of religion ought to be esteemed and venerated like the soul in the body'. In John's construction of the body politic 'those who are called prefects of religion direct the whole body',<sup>7</sup> which in effect endows the Church and priesthood with enormous status, and a degree of political power carefully left open to interpretation. Certainly the 'soul' receives minimal discussion, compared to the parts of the body, implying a minor, or at least 'external', practical role. John's metaphor of the body politic is not developed as part of hierocratic theory, and the expected goal of salvation is balanced against a strong emphasis on the earthly historical judgements of men. John's metaphor of the body politic emerges in the frontier between religious and philosophical ideals on one hand, and the world of medieval courtly politics on the other. This original context and articulation of the body politic connected the metaphor to the larger framework of divine cosmic order, endowing it with much of its emotive and symbolic *cachet*.

### *Christine's 'Masculine' Body Politic*

Christine's less radical treatment of the metaphor of the body politic is developed in *The Book of the Body Politic* (1406 or 1407) and is a 'masculine' image in the genre of the mirror for princes. In this Christine emphasized political responsibility, social integrity and honourable behaviour, tailored to the needs and aspirations of her elite male audience. The work was dedicated to the fourteen-year-old Louis of Guyenne, heir to the French throne. While Christine draws heavily on John of Salisbury's conception of the body politic, Kate Forhan is correct in arguing that John and Christine deploy the metaphor for different ends, reflecting their 'very different perception of political life'.<sup>8</sup> Christine's debt to John's faux-Plutarch source is immediately obvious, as are many of her alterations to it.<sup>9</sup> As Forhan notes,<sup>10</sup> there are significant differences in context for John and Christine, which must be taken into account when contrasting the two treatments of the metaphor. Christine was living in a most unstable society, close to social breakdown, and confronted with a weak monarch. Thus, rather than reading Christine as a political conservative, we may more accurately read Christine's writings as a plea for a harmonious polity, where everyone, from the lowliest woman to the most powerful king, recognizes their socio-political responsibilities.

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<sup>7</sup> John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, v. 2, II, 282 (trans. by Nederman, p. 67).

<sup>8</sup> Kate Langdon Forhan, in her introduction to her translation of Christine de Pizan's *The Book of the Body Politic*, p. xxx.

<sup>9</sup> *Corps de policie*, I, 1, p. 2 (trans. by Forhan, p. 4).

<sup>10</sup> Kate Langdon Forhan, 'Polycracy, Obligation and Revolt', p. 49.

While it is not the aim of this study to expand on Christine's 'masculine' body politic in any great detail, there are a few salient points of particular interest. Whereas for John, God and the Christian Church were the animating soul of the body politic, for Christine virtue is the regulator of human life, the aim of which is to achieve happiness. To a degree this probably reflects a broader historical trend in terms of the relationship between the religious and the political realms, and to a degree also the growth of a 'middle class' and more complex social relations. Nevertheless, Christine's more traditionally conceptualized body politic elevates the feminine to the position of highest guiding authority, a move which she ascribes to classical authority. The ideals of this body politic are thereby feminized; they are now happiness embodied in femininity, and the accompanying virtues which 'ancient philosophers described and symbolized in this manner: Felicity is a very beautiful and refined queen seated on a royal throne, and the virtues are seated around her'.<sup>11</sup> Although at first glance Christine's use of the female archetypes fixed by the dominant culture may not seem a radical move, on closer reading the skill with which she deploys these familiar tropes to destabilize the patriarchal order is most impressive.

Christine continues in the manner of the mirror for princes, describing the education, diet and exercise necessary for the novice leader. As discussed earlier, the metaphor of the body politic is animated by a tension between the immutable, eternal realm of philosophic ideals, and the unpredictable, finite realm of human politics. In *The Body Politic* there is both a Christian emphasis on the distinction between immortal soul and mortal body, and an injunction to keep in mind the judgements of honour and glory in human historical memory. The prince is both the focus and the emblem of the good order of the community, and yet at the same time mortal. Accordingly, the importance of the political and moral education of the prince cannot be overstated. His morality and his mortality together symbolize the coherence and the frailty of the political community to be overcome in its re-embodiment in another carrier figure. The prince 'appercevra et cognoistra sa fragilité et qu'il est home mortel subget a briefve vie, passioné des choses mortelles, naturelle et fraisles comme autre home, et sans quelconque difference excepté des biens de fortune' [will learn to perceive and comprehend his fragility as a mortal human, subject to a brief life, impassioned by transient mortal affairs and as frail as any other person, no different except for the gifts of fortune].<sup>12</sup> Although the prince and the political community are part of a larger divine framework for Christine, her construction of the body politic does not grant the person of the prince himself a divinely sanctioned status. This is quite unlike later conceptualizations of the body politic as the 'king's two bodies'—the body natural and the body politic. The construction of the king's two bodies divinely sanctions

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<sup>11</sup> *Corps de policie*, I. 2, p. 2 (trans. by Forhan, p. 5).

<sup>12</sup> *Corps de policie*, I. 7, p. 9 (trans. by Forhan, p. 11).

the purity and infallibility of the body politic, while allowing for the corruption and death of the body natural. However, in Christine's theory the prince is prince because fortune, rather than a divine blood-right, has singled him out. Christine's prince is explicitly open to the judgements and criticisms of history. In this construction the body natural *is* the body politic.

The political space opened up in *Policraticus* has widened to a remarkable degree. Christine exhorts the prince to love and honour God, but is disconcertingly dismissive of 'sa divine loy et les sains establissemens' [the divine law and holy institutions], which she bluntly explains that she will 'lesse a declairier pour cause de briefté et pour ce que a plusieurs gens moult en ouir parler leur sont choses ennuyeuses' [not to discuss for reasons of brevity, and also because most people would prefer to hear of less boring things].<sup>13</sup> Less boring things are more those that are practically oriented, including taxation; welfare; liberality, humanity and clemency; care for widows, the poor and destitute; self-control and the avoidance of lechery; suitable recreation; and the validity of striving to achieve a good reputation, praise and glory. The prince for the most part is expected to be, and to be seen to be, virtuous. Christine is tactful and practical here however, allowing for more ethically flexible behaviour from knights and nobles, who are responsible for the protection of the body politic and may therefore legitimately deploy 'subtle tricks'.<sup>14</sup> If Machiavelli can be described as constructing the political as the art of the possible, Christine could be distinguished as defining the political as the art of the necessary. The section on the third estate is fairly short and direct, explicitly arguing that accepting one's station in life is God's will and a necessity. Yet there are thinly veiled warnings here to those who exercise bad governance, as Christine treads a fine line in stories of evil rulers who inevitably suffer 'a villainous death' and are 'defamed in memory'.<sup>15</sup> However, in the already highly unstable political structures of her time Christine at no point incites or sanctions rebellion. *The Body Politic* is clearly addressed to her noble audience, and her warnings to the irresponsible and immoral ruler are cloaked in incitements to virtue and patience, and warnings of the wrath of God and an inglorious reputation. Further, Christine is clearly addressing a male audience, exhorting them to fulfil the noble ideals of protecting, respecting and caring for the welfare of women and the less fortunate. Not surprisingly, *The Body Politic* displays none of the dislike of the feminine found in John's *Policraticus*. Women are rarely mentioned, but her few references to them tend to be positive. For example, she tells of Rome when 'les couraiges

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<sup>13</sup> *Corps de policie*, I. 8, p. 12 (trans. by Forhan, p. 15).

<sup>14</sup> *Corps de policie*, II. 21 (trans. by Forhan, p. 89). Forhan's translation was based on the earlier edition of the *Corps de Policie* edited by Robert Lucas (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1967). This phrase, found in Forhan's translation, does not occur in the more recent edition.

<sup>15</sup> *Corps de policie*, III. 7, p. 104 (p. 103).



des hommes et des femmes adont y estoient de grant vigueur' [the spirit of men and women was very vigorous].<sup>16</sup> The most substantive story is of King Pyrrhus who:

ala contre une cité de Grece que l'en appelloit Lacedemone, qui jadis fu de grant renommee, mais a celle fois fu plus defendu a estre destruite par la force des femmes que des hommes, ce dit Valere. Car a defendre la cité et le pays vint si grant quantité de femmes que il convint a Pirus s'en partir honteusement

[attacked the city of Greece called Lacedemonia which was once very famous. But this time it was better defended by the women than by the men from being destroyed by force; so says Valerius. In order to defend the city and the country, such a large number of women fought that it forced Pyrrhus into a shameful retreat]<sup>17</sup>

There is a discreet insinuation that ancient authorities celebrated the achievements of women and appreciated their capacity to contribute to the body politic.

### *Alternative Constructions of Polity: The 'Feminine' Body Politic*

Before examining the practical aspect of the 'feminine' body politic, it is necessary to look briefly at *The City of Ladies*, probably Christine's best-known work. For our purposes there are noteworthy characteristics of this text that demonstrate its role as the 'ideal' aspect of the metaphor of the body politic. Christine's chosen title is reminiscent of Augustine's *City of God*, and thus alerts readers to her intention to create a perfect realm that, in the ideal, would be reflected on earth. Christine's purpose is to create a community where moral and just women—past and present, pagan and Christian—will be safe from demeaning slurs and contemptuous accusations. This ideal of the 'feminine' body politic for women of honour is called 'un nouvel royaume de Feminie' [a New Kingdom of Femininity] 'le colliege femenine' [the feminine college] and 'l'escole de Sapience' [school of wisdom], and is thus an educated and educating realm of security and peace.<sup>18</sup> Christine's City of Ladies includes pagan as well as Christian women, using the authority of classical sources as well as later religious ones. Not surprisingly she takes a great deal of poetic licence with most of her tales, retelling them to cast women in a positive light. The City is ruled over by the Virgin Mary, and there is a plethora of stories of virgins, saints and martyrs, reassuring to a medieval audience. Less familiar feminine figures such as women scholars, inventors,

<sup>16</sup> *Corps de police*, I. 12, p.20 (trans. by Forhan, p. 22).

<sup>17</sup> *Corps de police*, I. 17, p. 29 (trans. by Forhan, p. 32).

<sup>18</sup> *Cité des dames*, II. 12, p. 250 (trans. by Forhan, p. 117); *Trois Vertus*, I. 1, p. 9 ; I. 2, p. 10 (trans. by Lawson, p. 35).

strategists, warriors, and loyal wives portray women as intelligent, astute, active, and useful. Whereas John's original body politic and Christine's 'masculine' body politic played upon an already existing (Christian) cultural framework, the 'feminine' body politic required more elaboration.

The more revolutionary body politic demanded that Christine contrive an ideal, abstract, universal city-polity for women of honour. In other words, Christine had to devise a precedent in the socio-cultural, political, and historical imagination that would enable women to be seriously considered as political actors and valuable participants in the political community. Seen like this, *The City of Ladies* can be characterized as an enormous achievement in opening up a possibility in the medieval cultural milieu for the 'feminine' body politic. Showing 'comment toutes choses faisables et scybles tant en force de corps comme en sapience d'entendement et de toutes vertus sont possibles et aisies a estre excecutees par femmes' [how all things which are feasible and knowable, whether in the area of physical strength or in the wisdom of the mind and every virtue, are possible and easy for women to accomplish].<sup>19</sup>

### *Christine's Book of the Three Virtues*

Christine is explicit that we are to understand *The City of Ladies* and *The Book of the Three Virtues* as directly related. *Three Virtues* begins with Christine describing herself as resting, exhausted, 'mon corps lasses pour cause du long et continuel traveillie' [exhausted by the long and continual exertion]<sup>20</sup> of writing the preceding text. As in *The City*, she is visited by Reason, Rectitude, and Justice, who exhort her to take up her pen once more to encourage 'l'université des femmes' to join 'l'escole de sapience'.<sup>21</sup> From the perspective of this study it is not enough to imagine the ideal and immutable realm of a community of women: Christine must also concretize these ideals for the dynamic of the metaphor of the body politic to exercise its full power and appeal. *Three Virtues* follows the same organizational scheme as *The Book of the Body Politic*. Beginning with the social and political elite, it works down from princesses through all stations of medieval life—always solely addressed to women. This work is very different in tone and

<sup>19</sup> *Cité des dames*, II. 13, p. 252 (trans. by Richards, pp. 117–18).

<sup>20</sup> *Trois vertus*, I. 1, p. 7 (trans. by Lawson, p. 31).

<sup>21</sup> *Trois vertus*, I. 2, p. 10 (trans. by Lawson, p. 35). Although, 'université des femmes' may mean in this context something like 'universal womanhood', as Lawson's translation assumes, Christine may also playing with the sense of 'university of women' retained by Willard in her translation *A Medieval Woman's Mirror of Honour: The Treasury of the City of Ladies*, trans. by Charity Cannon Willard (New York: Persea Books, 1989), p. 71; on possible sources for her phrase *université des femmes*, see the comments by Richards in this volume, p. 85 n.12.

intent than *The City of Ladies*, a difference best encapsulated in the figure of Worldly Prudence, one of the imagined primary advisors. While never going quite so far as to argue that reputation is more important than actual being, Christine, although always a model of tact and discretion, comes extremely close to articulating this position. For the imagined community of women to survive, let alone thrive, in an imperfect world, the practices recommended by Worldly Prudence are obligatory.

*The Book of the Three Virtues* is down to earth and realistic in its expectations and advice. It grounds the abstract ideal city in the medieval world; and while it never sacrifices the guiding principle, it is focused on what is necessary and achievable, balancing the demands of the ideal and of its practical realization. Like the princes of the 'masculine' body politic, princesses are warned against self-indulgence, luxury, and displays of excess. Christine locates the ideal princess in the liminal realm between the contemplative life and the active life, for 'la contemplative peut bien sans l'active, mais la droicte bonne active, mais la droicte bonne active ne peut sans aucune partie de la contemplative' [while the contemplative life can manage quite well without the active, but the good and proper active life cannot endure without some part of the contemplative].<sup>22</sup> While this might be read as a mere sop to the religious beliefs and powers of the day, it suggests a recognition that the immutable realm of abstract ideals is an indispensable guide for action, especially for those in positions of power who, in this case, have the capacity to guide and protect the 'feminine' body politic in an adverse world. Yet in terms of overt traditional beliefs Christine is lenient in the expectations she places on women, recognizing that they are active and often overworked members of the community, with limited time for prayers and contemplation of the divine. She recognizes that:

ceste dame a qui soit commis grant gouvernement, comme plusieurs font et ont fait a leurs femmes quant les veoyent bonnes et sages et ilz aloyent hors, ou ilz estoient occupéz aillieurs [...] telles dames font a excuser plus meismes vers Dieu se tant n'employent de temps en longues oroisons que celles qui plus ont loisir

this lady, to whom great powers to govern are entrusted, will merit the trust that many lords have, and have had, in their wives when they see that they are good and prudent and they themselves go away to be occupied elsewhere [...] These ladies should be excused even by God if they do not spend so much time in lengthy prayers as those with greater leisure.<sup>23</sup>

Just as Christine represents the frontier between action and contemplation and yet tends to favour the active, political and engaged life, so she values reputation almost more than inner recognition of chastity and good nature. The message here

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<sup>22</sup> *Trois vertus*, I. 12, p. 48 (trans. by Lawson, p. 60).

<sup>23</sup> *Trois vertus*, I. 12, p. 48 (trans. by Lawson, p. 59).

is clearly that however satisfying it may be to know oneself to be pure, in the ‘real’ world of political manoeuvring, slander and reputation, one must be seen to be good in order to maintain order, to progress towards a more enlightened, harmonious society and advance the standing of women. Christine might acknowledge that, just as the judgements of men are at their best still inferior to the knowledge God has of one’s inner soul, so among the sordid medieval imagery of corrupt and corrupting women, women must learn to play a counter-game of virtuous appearance. For a good reputation is the greatest treasure a princess or noble lady can acquire.<sup>24</sup> To this end Christine offers advice on the practices and appearances of modesty, chastity, and sobriety. It is not sufficient in a world of gossip to be innocent, one must be seen to be so. Her counsel includes the ‘management’ of husbands, relatives, court nobles, and those a princess knows dislike her. If fortune turns against a princess and she encounters disdain, ‘la sage dame usera de ceste discrete dissimulation et prudent cautele, laquele chose ne croye nul que ce soit vice, mais grant vertu quant faicte est a cause de bien et de paix et sans a nul nuire, pour eschiver greigneur inconvenient’ [the wise lady will use this discrete pretense and prudent caution, which is not to be thought a vice, but is a great virtue when it is done in the cause of goodness and peace, without injuring anyone in order to avoid a greater misfortune].<sup>25</sup> That is, sham and trickery are condoned for the greater good and harmony of the polity, but never merely to enhance one’s own social standing.

This emphasis on creating and maintaining peace and unity is a common theme throughout Christine’s works. Unified and peaceful relationships—among women, between women and men, between the different social groups of medieval society, and between the political factions of French politics—for Christine required a radical rethinking of conceptualizations of women and their capacities. Women had to be valued as equal partners and respected participants in the home, the larger society and the political community. Much of the rethinking of the place of women is played out in Christine’s deliberations concerning marriage and married women. In many ways her views on marriage and wives enabled her politics to be more inclusive and attractive to women and men of her own time, for while she never denied the value and status of a celibate life devoted to God, she argued strongly that mothers, wives, and widows deserved undiminished respect and social standing. For Christine, in practical terms in the sociopolitical realm, an inviolate feminine body was not the most laudable achievement, nor was marriage cast as merely a second best option for controlling sexual passion. Marriage was potentially a loving, respectful, and equitable relationship between a man and a woman, which could reframe the social standing of women in general, ‘il en est qui vivent en grant paysibleté, amour et loyauté ensemble, par ce que les partie

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<sup>24</sup> *Trois vertus*, I. 11, p. 41 (trans. by Lawson, p. 55).

<sup>25</sup> *Trois vertus*, I. 16, p. 64 (trans. by Lawson, p. 70).

sont bonnes, discrettes et raisonnables' [for there are those who live together in great peacefulness, love and loyalty because the partners are virtuous, considerate, and reasonable].<sup>26</sup> I suggest that this marriage topos can be extended to help understand the relationship between Christine's more traditionally framed 'masculine' body politic and her more radical 'feminine' body politic. Christine's views on equitable and respectful marriage give us a framework in which to contextualize the ideal relationship between the 'masculine' and the 'feminine' bodies politic. That is, it is ultimately through their harmonious unification that the body politic of the nation is most likely to achieve peace and good fortune. This furthers Christine's ideal of an inclusive polity, where men and women are both acknowledged as political actors. While there is a degree of separation between the two realms, at least to the extent that Christine believes women have a political and ethical responsibility to each other, both the 'masculine' and the 'feminine' bodies politic entrain the same overarching duties. The overall aim of bringing together the 'masculine' and 'feminine' polities is to achieve peace, communal integrity, and a just society.

In *The Book of the Three Virtues* the emphasis is again on the internal coherence and integrity of the 'feminine' body politic. Although it is beyond the brief of this essay to detail the specific advice Christine offers to each group of women in medieval society, what is remarkable is the number of groups of women she targets for consideration. The categories of women include virgins, princesses, ladies, maids, widows, mothers, and prostitutes. Whereas the more elite women are less surprising inclusions, her consideration of middle- and lower-class women, wives, widows, and prostitutes is most unusual for a medieval tract. This wide range of categories opens up notions of 'good', or potentially redeemable, women to a startling degree—in marked contrast to the norms of her day. Such a categorical expansion challenges the usual binary classification as pure or corrupt, implying instead that any woman, judged on the basis of her moral conduct and contribution to the community, could be regarded as a worthy member of the polity. In light of these more flexible and inclusive boundaries, and in the broader context of the male-dominated medieval socio-cultural structures, Christine sets a high value on the integrity of the 'feminine' body politic. Accordingly, women of all social stations have a duty to help and protect the integrity and reputation of each other, never engaging in sinful practices or encouraging others to do so. Most obviously, it is the duty of all women to find alternative employment for prostitutes. It is the responsibility of princesses to seek out and aid poor women, women giving birth, and so on. They have a responsibility to set a good example, always conscious of protecting and enhancing their reputation whenever possible yet without seeming to have an excessive concern for the impression they create. Virtue is an invaluable quality, but, in the imperfect political arena of power, an air

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<sup>26</sup> *Cité des dames*, II. 13, p. 254 (trans. by Richards, p. 119).

of indifference toward oneself, coupled with strict adherence to the responsibilities of nobility and an eye to the impression one creates, is laudable. To this end, a governess's duty includes warning her charge against the wiles of men and courtly intrigues, and refusing to aid in illicit affairs. Court women also have a responsibility to each other, to speak well of one another and to protect each other's reputations. Christine is clearly of the opinion that the 'feminine' body politic is vulnerable when women are divided by political and romantic intrigues. This is not only true for noble women and those of the court. Servants are bound to protect the reputations of their mistresses, and all women are encouraged to find respectable occupations. Where women have become prostitutes, which Christine clearly ascribes to circumstances rather than any essentially bad quality in the women themselves, all other women are beholden not only to find them alternative employment, but to accept them back into the community of women. Women are thus neither essentially pure nor corrupt. Although Christine never challenges the assumption of a hierarchical social order, both a woman's social station and her means of livelihood are seen to be decided by a combination of fate, the dictates of a misogynistic culture that limits her opportunities, and her own capacities to navigate the options available to her. In a world of limited agency Christine counsels women to make ethical and strategic choices whenever possible. Ultimately the integrity of a 'feminine' body politic will enhance and secure the socio-cultural position and political opportunities of all women.

Crucially in terms of this study, Christine desires the 'feminine' body politic, the community of women, to span time and space, joining women from different countries and cultures, at least in so far as she includes pagan historical figures into her ideal polity as a theoretical basis for actual community. Again, mirroring the dynamic movement of the metaphor of the body politic from individual to imagined community, the final move of the body of the text is to bring readers, listeners, and writer together through the first person pronoun. Christine explains: 'me pensay que ceste noble oeuvre multiplieroye par le monde en plusiers copies, quel qu'en fust le coust [...] la verront et orront maintes vallians dammes et femmes d'auctorité[...] ou temps present et en cil a venir' [I thought to myself that I would distribute many copies of this work throughout the world whatever the cost [so that] many valiant ladies and women of authority will see and hear it now and in times to come].<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, because she has written in French, in a politically charged break with the Latin scholastic tradition, she believes her work will become more widely known. That is, the vehicle of her message, like its substance, appeals primarily to a female and vernacular audience.

So far we have traced the development of two metaphors of the body politic in Christine's writings. The first is a more traditionally conceived 'masculine' body

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<sup>27</sup> *Trois vertus*, III. 14, p. 225 (trans. by Lawson, p. 180).

politic. The second is developed in *The Book of the City of Ladies* and in *The Book of the Three Virtues*. It is a 'feminine' body politic, conceptualized in the abstract and universal realm of philosophical ideals in the former text, and grounded in the realities of medieval life for women in the latter tract. Yet to be a truly emotive and psychologically powerful metaphor the body politic requires manifestation in a symbolic figure. In *The Book of the Body Politic* the assumption is that the body of the prince is the singular incarnation of the body politic. However, it is less clear who the corresponding emblem is for the 'feminine' body politic. The Virgin Mary presides over the ideal city, including pagan ladies as well as Christian ladies, and thereby extending the boundaries of the community of women. Mary, being human, a wife, a mother, and a virgin, but of the divine world, is invested with the very mix of positivities that Christine urges for women. That is, although Mary is primarily lauded in theological terms for her inviolable virgin status and as the medium for the divine-made-flesh, she is also a wife and mother, and therefore embraces many of the categories of women that Christine was keen to promote. Therefore, even as the Virgin is 'alone of all her sex'<sup>28</sup> and an exception, she is also an archetype exhibiting radical possibilities for all women. As a vehicle for the down-to-earth advice of Worldly Prudence, of course, Mary is less convincing.

### *The Figure of The 'Feminine' Body Politic: Joan of Arc*

I want now to argue that in the last work of Christine's life she celebrates the victories of Joan of Arc in such a way that Joan can be read as an effective symbol of the 'feminine' body politic—exceptional and exemplary. In fact, in the medieval context the emblem of the body politic is literally invested with the sense of the community. Christine's representation of Joan is as both a symbol and a reality of the strength and unity of France. Joan, as the figure invested with the sense of the 'feminine' body politic, is reinforced as a symbol of political unity through a close and respectful political relationship with the 'masculine' body politic in the figure of the newly crowned king.

As Marina Warner has explained, Joan of Arc embodied a number of hopes, fears and possibilities that made her a potent symbolic figure, both in her own time and to later eras.<sup>29</sup> In the mythologies surrounding Joan it is worth remembering that there is some overlap between the actual person in her contemporary context and the symbolic role of the figure of Joan of Arc in later times. Joan embodied both the fractures of her own time and its yearning for integrity and cohesion. The dream was, of course, that Joan the Maid would unify a nation torn apart by war,

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<sup>28</sup> Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex. The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London: Vintage, 1976).

<sup>29</sup> Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc. The Image of Female Heroism* (London: Vintage, 1981).

by religious, regional, political, economic and social inequalities and differences. In her own time part of the symbolic power of Joan of Arc was her virgin status. The sense of bodily integrity, boundedness and purity was crucial in the Middle Ages—in fact ‘tested’ by royal and religious authorities before Joan was accepted as God’s messenger. Virginity, centred on the ideal of an unbroken hymen, and located her in yet another liminal symbolic zone. As Warner notes, her name for herself, Jehanne la Pucelle, with *pucelle* carrying connotations of innocence and nubility, placed her at cultural borders. Thus, ‘The very ambiguity of her body [...] in the name that she chose—which means ‘virgin’ and yet simultaneously captures all the risk of loss—she shows herself to span opposites, to contain irreconcilable oppositions’.<sup>30</sup> The virgin state of the body of Joan, as both human and as divinely sanctioned, as woman and as warrior, offered both the possibility and an image of coherence and independence for the nation. What is interesting in this context is that, despite playing on the words ‘*pucellette*’ and ‘*fillete*’ in the poem,<sup>31</sup> Christine makes relatively little of Joan’s virgin status in contrast to later commentators. Nevertheless, as a pure woman, the Maid as celebrated by Christine is seen as ousting the English and containing the class, political, ethnic, and religious fractures of the time. Simultaneously, Christine celebrates Joan as she challenges the gendered norms and assumptions of the later medieval period, and in so doing presents an embodied proof of the good that follows from a politically active and respected feminine exemplar. By investing the nation of France in the figure of Joan of Arc as the *prosopopoeia* of the potential strength and integrity of the body politic, Christine makes a radical and original claim for the status and role of woman consistent with her lifetime’s work. As Kennedy and Varty note, it is most appropriate to understand the *Ditié* as ‘the fitting conclusion’ to all of Christine’s works, consistent with her contention ‘that women have a role of paramount importance to play in the unfolding of God’s designs for the world in general and for France in particular’.<sup>32</sup>

The *Ditié de Jehanne d’Arc* was completed on 31 July 1429 and written during Christine’s years of exile from the French capital because of the war. Angus Kennedy and Kenneth Varty suggest that Christine’s central theme is ‘the miraculous intervention of Providence, and the transformation which this has brought about in her own and France’s fortunes’.<sup>33</sup> The poem celebrates Joan’s victory from Christine’s perspective ‘as a devout Christian,’ ‘as a patriot’ seeing hope for a united France and political stability, and ‘as a life-long defender of the

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<sup>30</sup> Warner, *Joan of Arc*, p. 23.

<sup>31</sup> Introduction by Angus J. Kennedy and Kenneth Varty to their translation of Christine de Pizan, *Ditié de Jehanne d’Arc*, p. 15.

<sup>32</sup> *Ditié*, p. 16.

<sup>33</sup> *Ditié*, p. 10.



feminist cause'.<sup>34</sup> To this list I would add that Christine's previous works treating the metaphor of the body politic explicitly (the 'masculine' body politic) or implicitly (the 'feminine' body politic) give her an intellectual background and political platform from which to appreciate and articulate the sense of celebration and hope invested in Joan of Arc and Charles VII as symbolic figureheads. Christine captured the sense of wonder, relief and joy at the prospect of a peaceful and settled community-polity. In form and in substance the poem represents the symbols of the metaphors of the 'masculine' and 'feminine' bodies politic as united and strong, able to defend France and restore order. The poem opens with Christine's self-identification, with which we have become familiar. It works to personalize and concretize the recent chaotic events, literally invading and dissipating the integrity of the polity. The writing spirals out from the individual, in this instance as a recluse from the polity, to the community torn apart by war, offering hope: 'Je, Christine, qui ay plouré XI ans en abbaye close, [...] Ore à prime me prens à rire.' [I, Christine, who have wept for eleven years in a walled abbey [...] now, for the first time begin to laugh].<sup>35</sup> Linking the body politic to the greater divine and universal order the poem praises the divine grace and intervention of God, who has made it possible to restore order in reinstating the legitimate child of the 'roy de France legitime' [rightful King of France].<sup>36</sup> Christine delights that 'C'est par la Pucelle sensible, Dieu mercy, qui y a ouvré !' [All this has been brought about by the intelligence of the Maid who, God be thanked, has played her part in this matter!]<sup>37</sup> The Maid, Joan, is thus intelligent, a strategist, and politically active. However divinely inspired or sanctioned, she has the capacity for independent agency and is therefore a powerful figure in her own right. As in *The City of Ladies*, Christine's 'feminine' body politic embraces and is legitimated not only through the Christian norms, but also through ancient and pagan authorities, and this simultaneously draws past, present, and future together. The poem thanks God for Joan, reminds the audience of the ancient prophecies of 'Merlin, the Sibyl and Bede',<sup>38</sup> and predicts that Joan will conquer all enemies and unite France. Joan is 'fort et dure' [strong and resolute]<sup>39</sup> and is of greater worth than Esther, Judith, and Deborah. She has more power than Hector and Achilles, and is granted miraculous capacities beyond those of Gideon. According to Christine, these qualities reflect upon all women: 'Hee! quel honneur au femenin sexe! Que Dieu l'ayme il appert, quant tout ce grant pueple chenin, par qui tout le regne ert desert, par femme est sours et recouvert, ce que c.m. hommes [fait]

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<sup>34</sup> *Ditié*, p. 11.

<sup>35</sup> *Ditié*, i, p. 41.

<sup>36</sup> *Ditié*, v, p. 41.

<sup>37</sup> *Ditié*, xiv, p. 43.

<sup>38</sup> *Ditié*, xxxi, p. 45.

<sup>39</sup> *Ditié*, xxxv, p. 46.

n'eussent [Oh! What honor for the female sex! It is perfectly obvious that God has special regard for it when all these wretched people who destroyed the whole Kingdom—now recovered and made safe by a woman, something that five thousand *men* could not have done].<sup>40</sup>

Joan's position and her capacity to unite France reflect God's will. The cosmological order is reflected in the new political order, and the expected unification of the body politic is concretized and invested in the Maid herself. Christine's most profound hope is for peace, envisaged through the conjoining of the 'masculine' and 'feminine' bodies politic that will unify the larger body politic of France. From the point of view of this study the two crowns in the poem are of particular interest. The first is granted to Charles VII, symbol of the 'masculine' body politic, 'comme roy couronné en puissance tresgrande et fine, et d'espérons d'or espronné' [crowned King in might and majesty, wearing spurs of gold].<sup>41</sup> Joan, symbol of the 'feminine' body politic, is expected to bring peace and harmony, healing the fractures in France, Christendom, and the Church. She who will lead Charles. 'Donc desur tous les preux passez, ceste doit porter la couronne, car ses faiz ja monstrent assez que plus prouesse Dieu lui donne qu'à tous ceulz de qui l'on raisonne. [...] Si croy que Dieu ça jus l'adonne, Afin que paix soit par son fait' [Therefore, in preference to all the brave men of times past, this woman must wear the crown, for her deeds show clearly enough already that God bestows more courage upon her [...]. I believe that God bestows her here below so that peace may be brought about through her deeds].<sup>42</sup>

We can understand the *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc* as the continuation and symbolic fulfilment of Christine's dual writings on the metaphor of the body politic. Charles VII and the Maid embody and are invested with the power and potential of each body politic. It is because of their political union as equals that Christine predicts the unification and peace for the community-polity of France. Joan of Arc is symbolic of the feminine as peacemaker, mediator, and warrior for a just and noble cause. Christine has cited and approved such proactive figures of the feminine as warrior previously. In *The City of Ladies* she tells of Boccaccio's story of Queen Hysicratea who fought beside her husband, who like Joan wore the clothes of a warrior, and who 'se gouvernoit celle noble dame par force de grant et loyal amour que la tendreté de son beau corps, jeune et delié et souef nourri, estoit convertie si comme en tres fort et viguerieux chevalier armé' [conducted herself so valiantly that her fair and soft body, so young, delicate, and tenderly nourished, was transformed, as it were, into a powerful and vigorous armed knight].<sup>43</sup> Later historical reconstructions of Joan of Arc placed enormous emphasis on her

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<sup>40</sup> *Ditié*, xxxv, p. 46.

<sup>41</sup> *Ditié*, v, p. 41.

<sup>42</sup> *Ditié*, xlv, p. 47.

<sup>43</sup> *Cité des dames*, II, 14, p. 258 (trans. by Richards, p. 121).

virginity, as did the political representations of Joan in the Middle Ages. Christine is interesting on this issue, acknowledging Joan's virginal status and youth, but seeing Joan primarily as a female and taking little interest in contentious issues of Joan's sex, gender and sexuality. Christine's construction of the Maid was clearly as a woman, an extraordinary girl, but ultimately a representative of what women were capable of, a symbol of fulfilled potential. Christine foreshadowed the symbolic role Joan played, and continues to play, as a representative figure of the metaphor of the body politic. For Christine, Joan of Arc represented the 'feminine' body politic as the figurehead of an earthly community of women. Respected, equal, and politically powerful, the 'feminine' assumed its rightful place beside the traditional 'masculine' body politic invested in the body of Charles VII. Together these two polities could restore peace and unity to the larger body politic of France. Christine's position as a female scholar, her intellectual praxis, and her political affiliations and analysis were crucial to her capacity to invest Joan of Arc as the symbol of the metaphor of the 'feminine' body politic.

### *Conclusion*

This essay has sketched the two bodies politic evident in the writings of Christine de Pizan. We have seen her more traditionally framed 'masculine' body politic that culminates in the figure of the king crowned by Joan of Arc's endeavours. The alternative and complementary body politic is gendered as feminine. Its ideal aspect is presented in *The City of Ladies*, and its practical aspect explored in *The Book of the Three Virtues*. This 'feminine' body politic finds its particular expression in Christine's last work celebrating Joan of Arc. Joan represents a woman's fulfilled potential, and demonstrates the necessity of female political actors. Examining Christine's work from this point of view demonstrates the cohesiveness of her political project. That is, Christine argues consistently for a harmonious society and a unified France. In so doing, Christine puts forward all classes and both sexes as worthy for serious consideration as social agents. Through the 'feminine' body politic she presents women as actors capable of moral choice and therefore as having an important place in the political realm. Christine sees women as living in a society that demands they protect each other from material harm and social slurs. Her politics are inclusive and ethical, as she exhorts women and men to treat each other with respect and consideration. Through analysis of the metaphor of the body politic Christine calls for a reconstituted political arena.



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